# THE DEEPER MEANING OF STEWARDSHIP

JOHN M. VERSTEEG

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THE MODERN MEANING OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

# The Deeper Meaning of Stewardship

BY
JOHN M. VERSTEEG

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## FOREWORD

STEWARDSHIP, always a part of the Christian faith, is receiving fresh attention. The church aroused large interest in it for the sake of its world-wide needs. Increasing treatment is accorded it in the pulpit and the press. It is getting into the thought of the man on the street. This is a wonderful thing that is coming to pass in our midst. Stewardship is converting our collective concepts. The word of the social gospel is made flesh by it. This revival of stewardship spells the survival of our faith. Future generations will arise to call us blessed for taking it to heart.

Our defeats lie closest to our victories. In some quarters a one-sided emphasis came to prevail. Stewardship came to be taught for the expansion of our work rather than as the expression of our life. The stewardship departments in the various denominational campaigns were given a difficult task. They were expected, within limited periods, so to emphasize stew-

ardship principles that massive amounts could be raised. What wonder that when time was lacking for the former, only those phases were stressed that were sure to accelerate giving? Hence the tithe was exalted out of all proportion to the subject itself. Now we are able to see that this haste caused waste both of forces, friends, and funds. The church must teach stewardship, not to protect itself, but to save the world. It would be an unspeakable blunder were Protestantism to permit so basic a subject as this to be brought into discredit by those who seize upon it as a quick road to finance.

Stewardship is worthy of our thought, even though much that goes by its name may be unworthy of it. Indeed, much of the subject has not yet been thought through, which is another way of saying that much of this subject may have to be thought over. *Ex cathedra* deliverances concerning it abound, but they are not rooted in reason; there is no heart in them. It is open-minded study of stewardship of which the church stands in need. No blunder should be permitted to blind us to the splendor of this movement. It is capturing the Christian conscience in amazing

fashion. Stewardship now stands revealed as one of the sturdy truths first in the mind of Christ. To its massive and mastering implications his followers are responding. We need but to widen its meaning to have it pervade their lives.

These chapters are an attempt to embody these deeper aspects. Many items here discussed have elsewhere been finely dealt with. But there are certain phases, social and psychological, as well as spiritual, that have not heretofore been marshaled under the heading of stewardship. These chapters doubtless fall short of a thorough treatment. Much will remain unsaid. But if he can move some reader toward greater stewardship, the writer will at least have furthered the cause of the Lord he serves.

Special attention is called to the Appendix, where the voice of scholarship speaks in reference to the tithe.

J. M. V.

Jersey City, New Jersey.

"Do men gather grapes from thorns or figs from thistles? No,

every good tree bears sound fruit,
but a rotten tree bears bad fruit;
a good tree cannot bear bad fruit,
and a rotten tree cannot bear sound fruit.

So you will know them by their fruit. Any tree that does not produce sound fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

"It is not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord!' who will get into the Realm of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father in heaven. Many will say to me at that Day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name? did we not cast out demons in your name? did we not perform many miracles in your name?' Then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; *depart from my presence, you workers of iniquity.*' "—*Jesus.*

"The Gospel contemplates . . . bettering human society. It appeals to the sympathy and conscience of the individual, bidding him love his neighbor as himself, and, since he is bound to rejoice in his neighbor's happiness equally with his own, to treat the neighbor, not as a competitor, but as a partner or a brother, giving him freely all he needs. . . . Yet Christianity . . . has never been applied in practice."[1]—*James Bryce.*

[1] Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company from *Modern Democracies*, by James Bryce.

# CHAPTER I

## STEWARDSHIP CLAIMS

LANGUAGE is not an infallible means of conveying ideas. We sometimes overwork our terms. The temptation to do so is especially strong when we deal with elastic words. There is a mental glee that comes in putting words through spiritual gymnastics, as most of those given to speaking are able to testify. When our leaders saw some years ago that money-drives were necessary if the church were to meet postwar needs, they fell upon the word "stewardship" with avidity. Here was a word that could lend itself to any enterprise! They worked it for all it was worth. In every major appeal it was given prominence. Talk was made of the stewardship of prayer, the stewardship of time, the stewardship of money, the stewardship of life. And this use of the word, it must be confessed, was wholly legitimate. We are stewards of manifold mercies. All of

life is an intrustment. But it was not wholly wise. A word may stand for so much that it does not stand for enough. It is best to employ those terms that most clearly conform to life. In the speech of every day stewardship means the management of another's property. Stewardship is trusteeship.[1] A trustee administers buildings or funds. When stewardship is mentioned people at once think of money. This is as it should be. We dare not forget life-service, or time-investment, or worship, and we should seek for terms to express these properly. But let us reserve the word "stewardship" for that which it best fits. Let it be applied to *possessions*, to the *things* which we call ours. It is in this sense that the word will be used in this book.

*Stewardship comes to say that we need to rethink our religion.* There are not many claims one may deem more momentous than this. Stewardship is not so simple as some folks seem to think. Great truths cannot be compressed into epigrams. They overrun the banks of brilliant brevity. To give stewardship a pious name or to clothe it in pungent phrase is not to tell all of its story. Steward-

[1] It is more; but surely this.

ship is frequently mentioned in connection with tithing. We shall later attempt to see whether this is fair. Just now let us merely notice how really easy that is. It does not require much thinking. The tithe is predetermined—ten per cent for the Lord and you are through with it. You know just where you are at. If stewardship simply meant the payment of a set proportion, it might require emotion, but would call forth little thought. But since it involves the governance of our property, and of all property, we are forced to think a bit. For property to-day is exceedingly complicated. And stewardship holds that property must do the will of God. One might become a tither from *sentimentalism*. The pomp and circumstance of drives might sway one emotionally. But one becomes a steward only from *sentiment*. However deep the feeling, it is always attached to high thinking. Stewardship is synonymous with Christian thoughtfulness.

*Stewardship calls upon us to set up better standards.* For although it is a belief, it is most of all a practice. One must not simply agree *with* but *to* its truth. Most men are not alive to the need for a change in standards.

Their conduct accords with prevalent conventions. They are well satisfied if they live up to the rules and regulations of the society into which they were born. They do not consider it an obligation to examine the principles or standards of the social order into which they came. Plato opined that the unexamined life is intolerable for a human being. He ought to live now! What multitudes he would find in the "cow-paths of the mind," what hordes journeying in the grooves which the past produced! But it is different with a steward. He looks into things and his valor follows his vision. Knowing that persons are God's ultimate concern, he endeavors to bring all things into subjection to the passion of his Lord. He values property for what it can do for persons. He sees, as did Aristotle, that property must be the instrument of the best and highest life. Things to him are ever the scaffolding for personality. He puts conscience into his cash. It is alleged that no country is more thoroughly the victim of the "mob-mind" than this fair land of ours. The steward is an honorable exception. He does not "follow the crowd in evildoing" with his possessions. He has broken the habit of acquisition. He thinks

of business in "unbusinesslike" terms; he is acclimated to the vocabulary of Christ. Though life may often have to be compromise, it never for him spells surrender of the principle he holds. He offers Mammon no libations; he makes gold the servant of God. Nor is it simply a question of the adjustment of this principle to his circle of activities. It means the changing of the environment itself by way of this practice into the realm of God. This will not be accomplished by pious but thoughtless folks, nor by the reticent and cringing. If anyone is a candidate for volitional ventures, stewardship offers him unexcelled opportunities. To secure a social order in which the will of God is done is a lifelong task in which one must practice to preach. It is not done by counting so many dollars per week into one's tithing box, though this too may well be done. It is only done by unfaltering allegiance to one's trusteeship. Stewardship is not an issue to be accepted or rejected at one's leisure. Its rejection, to use common speech, means to turn Christ down. A verdict in its favor is a triumph for Christ's cause.

*And stewardship exacts enthusiasm.* To enlist one's property in the service of the best is

to sense the joy of deliberate saviourhood. One gets the sense of values that gladdened Jesus' life. One has an unobscured vision of the spiritual. The dollar is not in the way. One appreciates souls. Aggressive humility comes. A steward does not make his boast in his property. He makes his boast in the Lord. He prays: "Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do with thine own?" And he hurls his life after this prayer with the abandon of a soul who is at home in God. He does not, like the old mammy, put a tear in the collection basket. He concretes his sympathy. The man who organizes his emotions around stewardship builds his life on love.

If stewardship makes claims upon you, it also makes claims for *itself*. *Stewardship believes itself possessed of vision*. The steward sees the acquisitive ambition at the throat of the spiritual life. He senses that a world enslaved by selfishness can never crown Christ Lord. He sees the situation as it actually is. Statistics showing that only fourteen per cent of the incomes in the United States are over $2,000 per year,[2] that the vast bulk of the

[2] Compare figures quoted by Mr. Basil Manly before the Evanston Conference on "Christianity and the Economic Order."

wealth is in the hands of a few or in their control, corroborate his conviction. But he would know it were no statistics available. He would know, from his human contacts, how crushingly the hand of economic pressure bears down upon people, and the consequences in mental, social, and spiritual stolidity. The steward exalts the spiritual above and through the material. Stewardship is not a new thing that has come to pass on the earth. It is an ancient and basic truth with a new emphasis. It comes to say that the deceitfulness of riches chokes out spiritual life. The struggle for existence prevents many people from following after life. The steward sees the solution. Life must not be a worry; it must be a joy. It is his conviction that to own is to owe, to live is to give, to love is to lift. It is a tremendous portent that so many count themselves honored to be stewards for the Lord. We shall not have done with the loathsome diseases that paralyze the race until our sense of trusteeship embraces the physical. We shall not Christianize humanity at its base—the only place where it can finally and effectively hope to be Christianized—until the trusteeship of parenthood is given cognizance.

In short, the steward sees the solution for all our problems in a sense of trusteeship to God. The steward is the only really forward-looking man of his time. He is the citizen of to-morrow, the saviour of to-day. He sees that things exist for persons and not persons for things. We all see this truth in part, but the steward sees it steadily and sees it whole.

*Stewardship claims to be timely.* Our day is characterized by a reversion to pagan ideals. Just how far the war fostered this one cannot say. But that it is here thoughtful observers do not doubt. Much is doubtless the survival of pagan and barbarous ideas. We suffer sadly from selfishness. Our civilization needs healing, it needs synthesis. To quote Professor Conklin: "When one considers the utter anachronism presented by the survival of primitive or even savage ideals of religion, not only in an age of general enlightenment but even in persons of high intelligence and culture; . . . when one reflects on the fact that for nineteen centuries so great a part of the world that professes to be Christian has remained heathen at heart, and that to-day the teachings of Jesus are generally regarded by his so-called followers as too lofty to be prac-

tical, we may well wonder whether mankind is making any progress in religion."[3] Now, stewardship comes at a time like this with its invigorating emphasis on the enthronement of good above goods. It comes to make property safe for the soul. It furnishes a perspective on personality and on property that makes the relation between these two the glorifying of God. "Nothing can prevent mankind from sinking beneath the tremendous temptations due to modern wealth and power save the creation of a strong religious life which shall lead us to consecrate our control over nature to the process of bringing in the kingdom of God."[4] And stewardship, timely for the *world*, is timely for the *church*. Though seen in the light of the hope of the early return of our Lord, the early church placed property at the service of personality. But soon this pristine view was contaminated by contacts with the pagan world, and when the church was conquered by Rome its capitulation to Mammon was almost complete. The monastic move-

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[3] *The Direction of Human Evolution*, p. 170, Edwin Grant Conklin. Charles Scribner's Sons, Publishers, New York City.

[4] *Social Idealism and the Changing Theology*, p. 153, G. B. Smith. University of Chicago Press, Publishers, Chicago.

ment with its vows of poverty and obedience did not question the right of the social order from which it escaped. It did not find it congenial, but deemed it necessary. Nor were things bettered much when the Reformation came. The revolt against institutionalism fostered an individualism that was narrow in the extreme. The streak on the page Luther wrote in history may be traced to his incompetent grasp of the social teachings of Christ. The theory of purpose later came to be replaced by the theory of mechanism, and the sense of obligation succumbed to the sense of ownership. To-day, with all of our social gospel, many church members still think of Christianity chiefly in individualistic terms and lack the conception of their trusteeship for God in the affairs of everyday life. It is timely for the church to be recalled to a Christian view of life. Horace Bushnell said that the church needs but one more revival to win the world for Christ—a revival of stewardship. How timely, then, for this movement to recall the church to the task for which it chiefly exists. Nor could anything be more timely for the *individual.* We are told that "the doctrine of the selfless life" constitutes "the

one really great epoch in moral evolution, . . . comparable in its effect to the Copernican revolution in astronomy and the remodeling of scientific method achieved in the period from Galileo to Newton."[5] But this doctrine admittedly is "only one half of the truth." It is not self-divestment but self-investment Christianity asks. It is self-divestment from control over things and self-investment for a cause that makes acceptance of stewardship an epochal event in one's life. Stewardship is the only healthy diet for the soul. Lastly, stewardship is timely for the sake of *Jesus Christ.* Stewardship gives him a chance. It widens the application of his religion. New laurels will be placed upon his brow. He will be crowned conqueror in realms long withheld from his sway, and they will bloom to holiness under the mild dominion of the Prince of Peace.

Because stewardship is grounded in social spirituality there are a number of claims which it comes to make upon us. It asks that we rethink our faith, that we remold our standards, that we enter into the joy of unselfishness. For

[5] *The Rational Good*, L. T. Hobhouse. Henry Holt and Co., Publishers, New York City.

itself it makes the claim that it has the vision needed for a better way of life, and that its message is timely for the day in which we live. Every Christian, therefore, ought to consider its case. And he must give it his vote; neutrality is impossible; he must be for or against!

"When the Pharisees heard he had silenced the Sadducees, they mustered their forces, and one of them, a jurist, put a question in order to tempt him. 'Teacher,' he said, 'what is the greatest command in the Law?' He replied, '*You must love the Lord your God with your whole heart, with your whole soul, and with your whole mind.* This is the greatest and chief command. There is a second like it: *you must love your neighbor as yourself.* The whole Law and the prophets hang upon these two commands.' "—*Jesus.*

"The only way out . . . is to revise our conceptions of values, and to put the kingdom of God first. If we do this and look at real values, at values of intellect, heart, and conscience, and subordinate our doing and thinking to the kingdom of God, there will be no trouble in solving all other practical problems that may arise. And until we do this we must worry along as at present in blindness and confusion and bitterness of soul. There can be no abiding peace or joy, whether in the personal or in the social life, until men make the kingdom of God first and fundamental."—*Borden P. Bowne.*[1]

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[1] *The Essence of Religion*, pp. 274, 275, Borden P. Bowne. Houghton Mifflin Co., Publishers, Boston and New York.

## CHAPTER II

## THE FOUNDATIONS OF STEWARDSHIP

JESUS believed in life. His was a social faith. Of course we all have "the will to live." When we speak of "the struggle for existence" or "the instinct for self-preservation" we express our love of life. All evolutionary theories assume our devotion to existence. But Christ's belief in life was a boundless enthusiasm. It must have been patent to him, as to any observant man in his day, that the career he had chosen was not conducive to longevity; yet life, not death, was his theme. Indeed, his very thought of death was in terms of life. For him b-e-l-i-e-f always spelled b-e-l-i-f-e. He believed in life so strongly that he spent his life on it. Never was he more in earnest than when he spoke of it. He could conceive of no more heinous

offense than the dulling or crippling of life. Acclaimed as the light of life, he never made light of it. Life was his criterion. Vociferous applause gains one no standing with Christ. Merely to compliment him is to "damn" him "with faint praise." To be his friend one must hold *life* dearer than one's life. That poilu who wrote his mother just before the zero hour at Verdun: "Don't grieve for me, mother. The beauty of life is far more than life itself," had the only view agreeable to Jesus. Christ has no ear for those who but say to him "Lord, Lord," but those who do the will of his Father in the loving and lifting of life gain his unstinted praise. The world has never known a greater advocate of life than Jesus. No one surpassed him in *sensing solidarity with life.*

What hurt Jesus to the heart was that most of the folks he met were living on the fringe of life. They were content with so little of it. They did not invade life. This is why he voiced the longing, "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." It is clear now that to study biology without biography is to know the form of life but to miss the power thereof. Fortunate indeed should we account ourselves

that the portals of our libraries swing wide to let us freely commune with leviathan lives. Such communion begets the conviction that all great lives invaded life! They were adventurers into its unfrequented realms. They were "pioneer souls who blazed their paths where highways never ran."[1] They pursued "time-winds out of chaos from the star-fields of the Lord."[2] The language of the Master was vocal in their careers: "I came that ye might have life . . . abundantly." They loved life enough to invest their lives in its behalf. They made it clear that to aim *at* life we must aim *with* life.

To account for the viewpoint of Christ, you must consider not only his belief *in* life, but his belief *about* it. When we seek to know what life is we come to the discovery that no one has definitely defined it for us. No one is likely to. "Science, when a definition of the ultimate meaning of life is demanded of it, is no nearer a solution to-day than it was of old."[3] Herbert Spencer came as near to

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[1] Sam Walter Foss.

[2] Vachel Lindsay.

[3] *Foundations of Faith*, p. 21, John Kelman. Fleming H. Revell Company, Publishers, New York City.

defining life as any scientist probably will, when he spoke of it as the sum total of the forces that can resist death! Professor J. Arthur Thomson's great "Outline of Science" recites "the procession of life through the ages and . . . the linking of life to life,[4]" but a definition it does not attempt to give. Sir Oliver Lodge pursues the atom to its lair, and not content with the electron, comes upon the ion, so small that there must be a mass-meeting of multitudes of them before their gathering can be visible to the unaided eye. But the meaning is not thus found. Turn to a modern philosopher like Bergson and you are in a whirl of definitions in which consistency has hard sledding. From times immemorial men have set themselves to answer the question of life and in the day in which we live men never get quit of it. Why is the answer not forthcoming? Because, while existence may be static, or, rather, may seem so to be, life is on the move. Not by its roots, but by its fruits, as Dr. Fosdick has said, must life be judged. So long as Browning's description of man must be acknowledged even partially true,

[4] *The Outline of Science*, vol. 1, p. 6, J. Arthur Thomson. G. P. Putnam's Sons, Publishers, New York City.

"... he ...
Finds progress, man's distinctive mark alone,
Not God's, and not the beasts': God is, they are,
Man partly is and wholly hopes to be,"

life will escape all dictionary straitjackets and encyclopædia cages. Experience will speak trumpet-tongued where definitions are dumb.

"*He finds progress.*" Jesus preferred description to definition. He was all the time speaking of life in terms of growth. As he saw it, life is not something ready made; it is something in the making. We are not so much beings as becomings. Not so long ago religion persisted in repressing life. This stage has not been totally outgrown. Else why the frequent admonitions to be content with our lot? But, for the most part, religious leaders in our day foster fullness of life. They thus prove true to the genius of Christ, for Christ rings in the life that is to be. We cannot stay put and stay Christian. It may be the task of science to place an interrogation mark behind life and pronounce it a question. But it must be the task of Christianity to place an exclamation mark behind life and call it a quest. These are, of course, not mutually exclusive. But for Christianity to come short of this would

be to play traitor to its truth. With Livingstone, it must "go anywhere, provided it be forward."

This, you say, is simple enough. The fact of progress few now doubt. The evidence is all for it. What has this to do with *Christian* life? Much every way. For the distinguishing characteristic of Christianity is that it conceives of life as *progress in love.* To speak of love is to use a word of which very loose use is made. The love that seeks its satisfaction in *getting* disintegrates life. The love that seeks its satisfaction in *giving* unifies life. Needless to say, the latter alone is Christian:

> "Love is a flame to burn out human wills,
> Love is a flame to *set the will on fire,*
> Love is a flame to cheat men into mire.
> One of the three, we make love what we choose."[5]

Jesus hailed life as progress in love. It meant the deepening of devotion.

But devotion to whom? Again the answer is written large in all the gospel records. Devotion, first of all, to God. The secret of the success of Jesus lay in his constant love for

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[5] Reprinted by permission of the Macmillan Company, from *The Widow in the Bye Street,* Collected Poems, by John Masefield.

God. Men who paid attention to his message were bound to gain the impression that "this is life—to know God." The consciousness of God was foremost in his life. There is little to fear from the atheism that says there is no God. Most thinking folks are sane enough to perceive how foolish it is to "lecture on the corpse of religion when it is all the time alive and laughing at you." What we need to fear is the atheism that agrees *to* God but does not agree *with* Him; that acknowledges His existence, but does not seek His life. The God who is revealed in Jesus is achieved in life. Life is life only if we experience God. And "he that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love."

Let us be perfectly clear at this point. Knowing God does not depend upon assent to a creed. Of late, putting up creeds as straw men to be adroitly knocked down has been grossly overworked. Yet creeds that were made to express life have been made to repress it. The implements of religion have sometimes served as impediments to finding God. But not always. It is simply not true that

"When whelmed are altar, priest and creed,
When all the faiths have passed;

Perhaps, from darkening incense freed,
God may emerge at last."[6]

For those who have thus far known God best have highly valued "altar, priest and creed," and prophet and pulpit have shared this esteem. So long as man endures he will try to crowd into language the experience that is his. What we need to recognize is that creeds at their best only show what men have found out about God; it takes life to show that we ourselves have found Him. Browning had the truth of it:

" . . . To know
Rather consists in opening a way
Whence the imprisoned splendor may escape,
Than in effecting entry for a light
Supposed to be without."

Some words from the pen of Lyman Abbott, whose writings conclusively demonstrate that an old man can have young ideas, are relevant here: "Christ does not teach us about God; he makes us acquainted with God. . . . To him God was not a hypothesis but a personal and intimate friend. He did not from a study of

[6] "*Revelations*," *New Poems*, p. 90, by William Watson. Dodd, Mead and Company, Publishers, New York City.

the creation arrive at the conclusion that there is a Creator, as the scientist from a study of the arrowheads found in rocks arrives at the conclusion that there was a prehistoric man. He was acquainted with God as a child is acquainted with his father, and his aim was, not to demonstrate by the scientific method the existence of a Creator, but to impart to his disciples a spirit of filial obedience which would give to them an experience of companionship with God similar to his own. He himself lived in continual and unbroken companionship with God; and he sought to inspire in his disciples a spirit which would enable them to live in similar companionship."[7] To set out on one's career without God is to put one's life into bankruptcy before business has begun. God must be given preeminence. For life, he must come first. For life, he must *stay* first. *He must be the permanent passion.* To place him second is to place him last. God must be paramount and basic. He is the great necessity. He is *the* essential. God is life. And life is growth in God. To grow in God is to grow like him.

[7] Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company, from *What Christianity Means to Me*, by Lyman Abbott.

"Deeply seen, the moral ideal is not something which you wish to possess as something external to you, but it is something that you wish to *become.* Unless growth in truth or goodness is in the last resort *your* growth, whatever else it is, it is meaningless."[8] To know God is not merely to like him; it is to *grow like him.* People saw "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." How far have *we* progressed in God-expression?

Jesus met the test at the beginning of his career. He had to choose between following God and the pursuit of self. His three temptations are summed up in three words, "Cast thyself down." This is still the Satanic whisper: "Lower yourself; be less than God intends you to be; be content with a low purpose." To temptations such as these Jesus refused to succumb. *He accounted the reign of God supreme.* He refused to take orders from his purse. Neither praise nor gain could have dominion over him. He sought first the Kingdom.

Stewardship is founded upon this allegiance to God. It comes to admonish us all that *the basis of life must be clear* That must be

[8] *The Truths We Live By,* Jay William Hudson. D. Appleton and Co., Publishers, New York City.

settled first. The fundamental question is how to keep life related to God. With this settled all other problems take on aspects of light. With this unsettled other problems grope at noonday as in the night. Until you determine the drift of life your life will be adrift. *To be partner with Christ in the purpose of God* is the goal of stewardship.

But more remains to be said. We cannot interpret Jesus except in terms of service. We measure his success by his *love of man.* God

> " . . . had given him birth
> To brother all the sons of earth."[9]

He lived for others. He said: "I came that *ye* might have." The ages are debtor to him. When he plumbed the depths of his own motives he confessed, "For their sakes I sanctify myself." He owned to being "a witness to the truth." At a service conducted in his home town he spoke these weighty phrases: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me: for he has consecrated me to preach the gospel to the poor, he has sent me to proclaim release

[9] Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company, from *The Everlasting Mercy*, Collected Poems, by John Masefield.

for captives and recovery of sight for the blind, to set free the oppressed, to proclaim the Lord's year of favor." His characteristic attitude was: "I go to prepare . . . for you." *His consecration was social.* The ultimate impression he created was that "God so loved *the world* that he sent" him. He humanized religion. Henceforth, the service of God meant the service of man.

Now that we are free to read the New Testament without the blur of literalism, no truth stands out more clearly than that *Christianity is God's attempt to bring mankind to manhood.* To those who had barely existence, but much oppression and woe, he promised abundant life. To people who had far more excuse for their littleness than we, he said: "*Pagans* make food and drink their aim in life, but your Father knows quite well that you need that; only seek his Realm, and it will be yours over and above." How often he was moved with compassion toward those who seemed shepherdless sheep. The tug of the world was at his heart! To say that he had respect for life is to put the truth mildly. It is more accurate to say that he reverenced life. With unabated enthusiasm he labored for its sake. To deal

with life is to tread on holy ground. Life is the bush that burns but is not consumed.

Many respect life with their theories who desecrate it with their practice. This dual attitude means spiritual suicide. It is easy enough to give casual consent to the sublimity of life. In some respects nothing is more commonly acknowledged. We agree that the child of the bootblack has as much right to the best medical service as the child of the millionaire. But to put reverence for life into practice is a different thing by far. *Our service must articulate our love.* Conversion must bring not only newness of joy but newness of life. Nothing short of this will move us to realign our social order so that it ministers to life. Nothing short of this can weld the nations into the solidarity of saviourhood. Christ proceeded on the assumption that life responds to life. The keepers of the house of greed may well tremble at thought of this Christian appraisal of life. Once it becomes dominant the realm of Mammon shall wither into desolation and the light shall be darkened in the heavens thereof. The Christian God desires fullness of life for all his children, and no one and nothing has the right to withhold it from them.

The mark of stewardship in a follower of Jesus is this *social sincerity*. Conscious that "this is life: to know God," he will remember that, as Amiel phrased it, "Christianity, mystical in its root, is practical in its fruits." In the light of the meaning of life he will read his mission in life. Life's worth will determine life's work. He will not deliberately choose a profession or business inconsistent with or merely neutral toward his Christian confession. If necessity has forced him into employment not congenial to the advancement of the Christian cause, he will be instant in season and out to evince his concern for the day when the will of God shall be done.

For young folks this issue of social sincerity admits of no delay. Shrink from the thought as some may, in youth we choose for life! Statistics furnish copious proof that the Christian cause depends upon the choice of youths. There are some who at middle age ask of the Lord, "Revive thy work in the midst of the years." But most of these who failed to settle this question in youth find themselves victims to "the destruction that wasteth at noonday." They have never tasted life, yet they glibly talk of *disillusionment!* Speaking

broadly, we either give Christ allegiance in the days of our youth or we give it not at all.

Moreover, youth cannot put off the day of decision with assurance that it will recur. We cannot halt the years to "halt between two opinions." We must answer *with our lives*. We do! Ever the answer is an attitude. What is my life to do? hinges upon the question, Whose is my life to be? When God has you he can direct yours. You will discern God's directions for your life when you go God's direction with your life. You will be saved to serve.

This social sincerity, this genuine determination to lift mankind to God, is needed the more because of the world which we to-day confront. "The religious problem of our day is not a problem in metaphysics or theology; it is a problem in the practical values of human living." Thus an observant writer, Dr. Charles A. Ellwood, declares, and adds: "There is unfortunately abundant evidence just at present in the civilized world of reversion to a lower plane of moral and religious values than existed a generation ago; . . . and while there may be many grounds for encouragement, . . . it is useless to deny or to gloss over the

facts which seem to indicate partial social, moral, and religious retrogression."[10] An interesting sidelight on this is the return to earlier religious standards on the part of many who still take to themselves the name of Christ. We thus find Christian ethics submerged by Jewish concepts and New-Testament standards of life forsaken for Old-Testament standards of belief. It has been well said that a single page could hold all the utterances of Jesus upon such subjects as the soul and death and the hereafter. *His concern was with life.* "Christianity," says Bishop Gore, "came out into the world as 'the way.' It was a life before it was a doctrine." The Christian faith is inevitably social. The resolute effort to make society godlike will save the church from the contamination of these lower types. The social awakening will save our spiritual life from the sleep of death.

Stewardship, then, is founded upon *social spirituality.* Professor Edward G. Conklin, in *The Direction of Human Evolution*,[11] reminds us that "in the past religion has dealt to a

[10] Reprinted by permission of the Macmillan Company, from *The Reconstruction of Religion*, by Charles A. Ellwood.

[11] Charles Scribner's Sons, Publishers, New York City.

large extent with the individual and his relation to God; its chief concern was the salvation of individual souls and their preparation for a future life; it has been largely *egocentric.* The religion of the future must more and more deal with the salvation of society; it must be *ethnocentric.*" And Edward Caird once wrote, "A man's religion is the expression of his ultimate attitude toward the universe." Unless our consciousness of God means a concern for humanity we worship some deity other than the Father of our Lord. After Pentecost had come his followers were actuated by this social sense of the spiritual. Slaves walked with singing hearts and heads erect, conscious of a relationship that made them free in bondage. These early Christians had a self-esteem that led to esteem for others. Anything short of this they knew to be false to the spirit of Christ. But the church was unable to keep this vision. Its profound and simple reverence for life was soon contaminated by alien contacts and soon was fairly smothered beneath the load of Roman paganism. Small wonder that the church in the Middle Ages laid so little emphasis on regard for human life. The ancient Christian esteem for life began to come

back into its own with the challenging doctrine of the priesthood of believers which Martin Luther taught. According to it, the fulfillment of one's devotional life lies within one's own reach. But Luther did not follow out the logic of this thought. Why should any realm of endeavor strive for less than to fill life full? When Wesley claimed the world for his parish the viewpoint that reverences men began to be reclaimed. The struggle is still on. Old prejudices die hard and slow. Man has a hard time of it to respect mankind. But the old order changeth. Woodrow Wilson's statement is now seen to be true: "The truths that are not translated into lives are dead truths." Stewardship comes to ask, "Do you believe in life as Christ believed in it?"

Professor Giddings attributes history to the adventurers. Jesus thought faith. And he always looked for it. He never spoke of fate. Fate says that what happens *must* happen; faith says that what *must* happen happens. Fate is the religion of Islam, and Islam means, "I *submit* to God's plan." Faith is the religion of Christianity, and Christianity means, "I *subscribe* to God's plan." *One who subscribes to God's plan embraces stewardship.* He will

not be cowed by the voice of tradition or the clamor of the crowd. He will dare to think unpopular thoughts. Christ was no innocuous Apollo at play on some Olympian mountain. He had problems to face and faced them without flinching at the exactions they involved. "He set his face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem." He took a short-cut to death. He hurled his life after his faith. His ideas were his ideals. Brave without bravado, he saved others and spared not himself. His way of thinking infuriated the religious leaders of his day. He insisted upon thinking all things through to God. This is the wont of stewardship. The leaders of his day could not understand it. Their thoughts had root in tradition. The sweep of their minds reached the fathers. But Jesus brushed past tradition to God. They said, "It hath been said." Such arguments left Jesus unmoved. He answered, "But I say," and reasoned up to God. He never lost God out of mind. A man who does that courts hatred. He invites death. Edward Arlington Robinson fancies John Brown saying to his wife:

"Now and again to some lone soul or other
God speaks and there is hanging to be done,"

and ending the conversation with these words: "I shall have more to say when I am dead."[12] For such sacrifice is itself creative. Such death alone saves life. Stewardship spells sacrifice. *Stewardship roots in the cross.* It seeks to make Christians consistent with Christ.

To review what has thus far been said: Stewardship is founded on the sense of reach for God and humankind. Stewards are in earnest for the reign of God on earth. They therefore seek to make society spiritual. They know of no other way to follow Jesus Christ.

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[12] "John Brown." Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company, from *Collected Poems*, by Edwin Arlington Robinson.

"Store up no treasures for yourselves on earth,
where moth and rust corrode,
where thieves break through and steal:
store up treasures for yourselves in heaven,
where neither moth nor rust corrode,
where thieves do not break in and steal.
For where your treasure lies,
your heart will lie there too.
The eye is the lamp of the body:
so, if your eye is generous,
the whole of your body will be illumined,
but if your eye is selfish,
the whole of your body will be darkened.
And if your very light turns dark,
then—what a darkness it is!
No one can serve two masters:
either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will stand by the one and despise the other—
you cannot serve both God and Mammon. . . .
Seek God's Realm and his goodness. . . ."

—*Jesus.*

"Things are in the saddle and ride mankind."—*Ralph Waldo Emerson.*

## CHAPTER III

## SOCIAL CHRISTIANS

THE challenge of stewardship has such an intimate bearing upon every one of us that its total effect upon life ought to be thought through. Knowing the God of our Lord Jesus Christ and securing his reign in the earth is the *intent* of Christian life. Stewardship says that the *content* of life must be an aid to this. When Jesus had to decide his life he had to face the temptation which all of us have to face. *He was tempted to give content precedence over intent.* It was suggested that he dethrone himself and enthrone things. As has been previously noted, "Cast *thyself* down," was the Satanic proposal, and the Satanic promise was "All these *things* will I give thee." But Jesus was above the lure of things. This is why he questioned, earnestly: "Know ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" He was in*tent* upon the *in*tent of life. He repudiated the notion that a man's life con-

sists in the abundance of the things he possesses—yet how the notion lingers still! He refused to let things have dominion over him. It was impossible for him to be con*tent* with *con*tent. He resolved to be true to the intent of life or die in the attempt. And die he did! Yet when was death life-saving more than his? Kipling reports that "three hundred miles of cannon spoke when the master-gunner died." This was but as a whisper compared to the voice that spoke when the Master-Saviour died, and that speaks still and still shall speak because he *lives!*

He who decides to be true to the intent of life has a fight on his hands. The temptation to let the content of life subvert the intent of it assails us constantly. For one thing, the contents of life are ever before us and with us. We cannot get quit of them. They are catalogued in daily and magazine; they call to us from the highway and talk to us on the street; a resistless propaganda is carried on in their behalf. Pressing into service all that genius has devised in electricity, there is proclaimed to us from the housetops how much life can contain. There never was a day when the contents of life received such

publicity. Older people forget that this constant emphasis on things was not thus thrust upon them in their formative years. But the young people of to-day are reared in this atmosphere. It is easier, therefore, for them to assume that the content view of life is the normal view to take. Could the intent of life be advertised as incessantly as its content, what might not be wrought on the earth? It is a sobering reflection that good advertising so seldom lends itself to advertising the best. As Dr. Weymouth translates it, Jesus said: "Do not even begin to be anxious, asking 'What shall we eat?' 'What shall we drink?' 'What shall we wear?' Is not life more precious than food and the body than its clothing?" But business worries us night and day with the very things Jesus told us not to worry about. At times it appears perniciously persistent to keep us from "ranges beyond these mudwalls of the flesh."

Not only does what life has rather than what life is rivet our attention, but it commands our talent and our time. We labor not only for, but at, the bread that perisheth. Most of us find ourselves daily at work at the contents of life. One may well question the

sanity of a social order that keeps us down so to the grindstone of things. Jesus never forgot that "life is more than food." One lunatic surpassed in worth a herd of Gadarene swine. He was aware that constant attachment *to* the content of life may easily develop into treacherous attachment *for* the content of life. Hence his counsel to that fine young man to sell what he had and give it away and follow him: minus content, plus intent. Jesus observed that for this young man the quantity *in* life submerged the quality *of* life. He saw with what difficulty the rich would enter the kingdom and told of three "practical" worthies whose interest in real estate and live stock and marital affairs was such that they had the excuse: "*Therefore*, I cannot come."

When we turn from the things we do for pay to the things we do for play, again the contents of life stalk in endless procession before us. One sometimes has the sense of being overwhelmed with the flood of things that clamor to be introduced into one's life. Profit and pleasure precede purpose in the voices that fall on our ears, and the voice that bids us seek first the kingdom is a still small voice, scarcely audible.

When the content of life is at variance with the intent of life, *ethical dualism ensues*, and Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde set up shop where a unified soul once lived. As some one has said, we then become money-making or educational machines, with the unburied remains of souls tagging on behind. Our acts speak louder than our words—and sadder—when in things, instead of Him, we live and move and have our being:

> "To dress, to call, to dine, to break
> No canon of the social code,
> The little laws that lacqueys make,
> The futile decalogue of mode—
> How many a soul for these things lives
> With pious passion, grave intent! . . .
> And never ev'n in dreams has seen
> The things that are more excellent."[1]

But this is not the only ill that befalls those who turn their backs upon Christian stewardship. This content view refuses to stay within the confines of mere things. It leaps over into the realms of mind and of desire. It is a contagious scourge. *The man who is not a steward of his property plays traitor to the rest of his life.* He has thrown his soul out of focus.

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[1] *The Collected Poems of William Watson*, p. 78. Dodd, Mead and Company, Publishers, New York City.

Regard how it works out. Frequently young people—and occasionally older folks—turn to the Bible to seek *information about life* rather than *formation of it.* Victims of the content view, they pathetically turn the pages for the pettiest of problems, expecting to find there ready-made the solutions which they seek. In the Bible too content rather than intent is what they are looking for! Not Why but What is the keyword by which they seek admission to the secrets of the Book. In their eager quest for the letter the spirit falls dead at their feet. One is utterly incapable of making right use of the content of the Bible who does not hold preeminent the intent of the Bible. In regard to the church similar havoc is wrought. When a church service is considered from the angle of what it has rather than from the angle of what it is, tragedy results. Think on the sermon. It is bad enough that the initiated layman expects the sermon to be a sort of intellectual crazy-quilt that is able to give spiritual warmth. But those whose wont it is to judge life by what it may contain expect the sermon to be an easy page of answers for problems given them to work out in the school

of life. And they are sure to judge the preacher's success by the amount of money the church raised! They fail to see that the minister would play false to his mission did he not, in the majestic phrase of the Master, and quite regardless of finance, help men to "think in their hearts." He must help them to "cast the anchor deep beside the shore-lines of eternity." He dares not be the prophet of the picayune. He is the proclaimer of that eternal purpose, in, of, and for which life exists. To the man who is not a steward, the man who is contented with the contents of life and so thinks God ought to be, his words and worth are hidden; they cannot be revealed. Of such a man Drinkwater's words may be quoted with deeper meaning than the author perhaps meant with them:

> "Coveting the little, the instant gain,
> The brief security,
> And easy-tongued renown,
> Many will mock the vision that his brain
> Builds to a far, unmeasured monument,
> And many bid his resolutions down
> To the wages of content."[2]

The nonsteward is prevented from a normal

[2] *Abraham Lincoln*, by John Drinkwater. Houghton Mifflin Company, Publishers, New York City.

social life. In terms of psychology, his ego-complex staves off beneficent gregariousness. He is controlled by the consciousness of what his life can contain. Let no one think of this as something to be lightly dismissed. It is a deplorable condition, pathetically pathological. A man with this content-mood can never bring proper adjustment between the ego-complex and the herd-complex. He is entirely lopsided. The instinct for self-preservation is old and most profound. It is intended to lead us to social seriousness, but when it is stunted by greed it inhibits the soul. The acquisition-complex reverts to the primitive. There are not pathologists enough in the land to begin to determine how many enter by way of this complex into paranoia. But for this terrible plight, the views of the content-view would often sound humorous. Concerning one beautiful spirit who had recently been translated, a woman of means (content view) said to the pastor of her church: "Poor girl, *she had so little!*" And he answered and said unto her: "Madam, you are mistaken. You say, 'Poor girl, she had so little!' You should say, 'Rich girl, *she was so much!*' " Kipling's bachelor also betrays this aberrant mind: "A woman is

only a woman, but a good cigar is a smoke!"[3] A common revelation of this content view is that it is always measuring people by the money they have or make. Does a preacher receive a large salary? Then, lo, a successful man! To what important conference committee would Christ have been appointed?

The tragedy of this content-view can be traced further still. The damage is not merely to be found in academic terms (or titles!), official procedure, passion for statistics, mania for methods. Nor is its deepest damage that done to evangelism. It has taken this word, unquestionably great, denoting a work, unquestionably the greatest, robbed it of its grandeur and trailed it in the dust. Nor was its work at its worst when, in the realm of Life Service, it allured young people to a position rather than to inure them to a disposition of service for God and men. By far the most devilish deed to the credit of the content view is that it thwarts beyond measure our relationship to God. Once the content of life takes ascendency, once the acquisitive is paramount, prayer falls from heaven as no Lucifer ever fell. For

[3] *Poems of Rudyard Kipling.* Doubleday, Page & Company, Publishers, New York City.

prayer is dominant desire and what we *wish* is what we *ask*. Hence our prayers are often contradictions of our prayer. Our attitude speaks so loud that God cannot hear what we say! If, now, our inmost wish is concerned with what prayer will bring us rather than what prayer will make us, God will be to us a more or less exaggerated Santa Claus and will be accorded homage in the ratio that his response is favorable to our requests. No one wishes to arouse antagonism to prayer that shows honest desire. But if things take the reins of our lives, we will be driven far afield from the highway that leads to God. Then, if we retain our interest in God, it will be chiefly in his rather than in h*im*. Prayer becomes a handy tool rather than a triumphant task and a "moral battlefield." We ask for God's gifts rather than for the Gift of God. This is the surpassing sin of all the content view. It prevents a real experience of God. Its religious aim is circumscribed by individualism. *It even thinks of God as a possession.* At best it says, "God for my life." It never says (or at least, it never means), "My life for God." To say the one without the other is to make both impossible. God cannot be

ours until we are his. "Behold the goodness and the severity of God." The God who gives much requires much. The content view loses life because it saves it; the intent view saves life because it loses it.

The steward uses the content for the intent of life. He does not, ascetic fashion, regard things as barbed-wire entanglements for the soul. He accepts them gratefully. But to him they are only means by which to work God's will into the lives of men. This he never, never forgets. *Property must never be placed above life.* Never may things be allowed to jeopardize the soul. He is a first-class fighting man for the widow and fatherless and for the unprivileged. He will know what pitiful folly it is for a man to throw a rock through a window of the mill from which he "strikes." He will know how essentially immoral violence always is. But he will at least ponder whether the man who throws that rock is not registering, in a dim and stupid way, his conviction that property must not interfere with life. May not his throwing stones mean stuffing the ballot box in favor of life? Is there nothing to learn for us here? The Christian steward will feel that if we quit

calling Reds reds, we might stand somewnat of a chance to take their yellowness away! For the steward will ever remember that goods must serve man's good. Nor will he forget that property has a deep relation to life. The steward will see that the stomach has dealings with the soul. First, said Paul, that which is natural, then that which is spiritual. Man's best should not be used for property, but property for man's best. The world will begin to turn toward Christ when money-making is deemed a means of ministry to men. Nothing to-day is more heartening than the defiance of greed which the growth of the practice of stewardship implies. Love summons the Christian steward to "bring the best . . . quickly," even for Bolshevist and atheist, and all rejected folk. He rejoices if with muscle and mind and money he can further humanity. The reward of the steward is that, by setting God first, he gets "a close-up" on God. The pure in heart see God! They appear with him in glory!

This, then, is the practical issue which every person must face. He must choose whether he will be ruled by the content or intent of life. If so be he chooses content, he must reckon well the cost. He will oppose

his living to his life. He will be a split personality, but unconscious of it. Every outlook of his life will therefore be distorted. Social contacts will suffer at his hands. His way to God will be barred. If he seeks for the intent of life, he will bless life with brotherhood and crown life with God. He will describe his outlook on life with words that echo these:

"Only like souls I see the folk thereunder,
Bound who should conquer, slaves who should be kings,
Hearing their one hope with an empty wonder,
*Sadly contented with a show of things.* . . .

"Then with a rush the intolerable craving
Shivers through me like a trumpet-call—
O to save these! to perish for their saving,
Die for their life, be offered for them all!"[4]

A vote in favor of stewardship makes one a social Christian; that one can be Christian other than this appears unthinkable. Those who seek what life contains seek an alien goal, and thus their lives lack, at every point, spiritual sensitiveness. But those who are intent upon the reign of God are transformed into the spirit and mind of Christ. Shall *your* Christianity be selfish or be social?

[4] Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company from "Saint Paul," *Collected Poems*, p. 131, by Frederic W. H. Myers.

"A man going down from Jerusalem to Jericho fell among robbers who stripped and belabored him and then went off leaving him half-dead. Now it so chanced that a priest was going down the same road, but on seeing him he went past on the opposite side. So did a Levite who came to the spot; he looked at him but passed on the opposite side. However, a Samaritan traveler came to where he was and felt pity when he saw him; he went to him, bound his wounds up, pouring oil and wine into them, mounted him on his own steed, took him to an inn, and attended to him. . . . Which of these three men, in your opinion, proved a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?"—*Jesus.*

"Genuine benevolence is invincible."—*Marcus Aurelius.*

"Give all thou canst; high Heaven rejects the lore
Of nicely-calculated less or more."

—*William Wordsworth.*

## CHAPTER IV

## THE TITHE AND STEWARDSHIP

We are prone to substitute an act for an attitude. Folks are not social Christians *because* they are tithing ones. Stewardship goes far deeper. In the "uprightness of its integrity" it must state the truth, at whatever cost.

Though stewardship concerns our possessions it does not command the *tithe.* If you become a tither *for the sake of stewardship,* no fault can be found with you. But if you think of tithing as the end of stewardship, your thought is far afield from the spirit and mind of Christ. Tithing may be an expression of but it can never be a substitute for stewardship. Bishop McDowell tells of a man who boasted because that year he had given ten thousand dollars to the Christian cause and kept only ninety thousand for himself! Tithing hurts that man, much though he enjoys it. For it chloroforms his conscience; it sidetracks his soul from stewardship.

Tithing has been extolled as *the biblical standard.* Texts are frequently quoted to show that there were three tithes. But no one is able to say whether at any time two-fold or threefold tithing was regarded as the law, although scholars are convinced that in either case it was "merely theoretical."

With singular unanimity biblical scholars agree as to the confusion touching the tithe (see the Appendix for a completer putting of the facts). "The data at our disposal," says Dr. Driver, "do not enable us to write a history of the tithe."[1] "The laws of the tithe conflict remarkably with one another," says Dr. George B. Gray.[2] And another authority asserts that concerning the tithe "the history among the Hebrews is far from clear."[3] And this is the steadfast testimony of all eminent scholars. That in the face of this men should assert for the tithe binding authority seems incredible! A fair perusal of Scripture fails to bear out their claim. No standard obligation is indicated there. This is a daring thing

[1] *Deuteronomy.* Charles Scribner's Sons, Publishers, New York City.

[2] *Critical Introduction to the Old Testament.* Charles Scribner's Sons, Publishers, New York City.

[3] *The Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religion and Knowledge.* Funk & Wagnalls Company, Publishers, New York City.

to say in the face of the frequent claims to the contrary. But a study of the evidence permits one to say nothing else. It would be strange, of course, were nothing said of the tithe. The belief that man's resources should be placed at the service of his religion is as old as history. The most primitive of religionists sacrifice and make offerings. But the designation of the tenth was a late development. Political and economic ideas frequently make their way into religious views. So with the tithe. There was a widespread custom among ancient peoples of paying one tenth to the king. This practice existed among Greeks and Romans, Babylonians and Egyptians, as well as among the Hebrews. What simpler than to honor Deity with the gifts a ruler received? If we find in after years that any portion given the gods is called by the *name* of the *pro*portion that once was given them, we need not be amazed. (In Muhammadan law the tithe is sometimes one half or one fourth of the tenth.)

The early Old-Testament sources mention the bringing of the firstfruits. They consisted of a mere basketful. But in the later codes, much littered with confusions, the tithe idea

is found. It is sometimes insistent, but seldom consistent. Jacob voluntarily bargains with his deity on the basis of the tenth: "Of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth to thee." Many years later, eight centuries before Christ, Amos seems to think of it in terms of religious dues: "Bring your sacrifices every morning and your tithes every three days." Five hundred years before Christ, the Ezra-Nehemiah date, the demand for the tithe stands out: "And I perceived that the portions of the Levites had not been given them; so that the Levites and the singers, that did the work, were fled every one to his own field. Then I contended with the rulers and said, Why is the house of God forsaken? And I gathered them together, and set them in their place. Then brought all Judah the tithe of the grain and the new wine and the oil unto the treasuries. And I made treasurers over the treasuries, . . . and their business was to distribute unto their brethren. Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for the observances thereof." The tithe is in the Old Testament, but it is not the only thing there. *It is not*

*the exclusive requirement.* There were other standards, as one may read for oneself (see Lev. 23. 9–41; Exod. 30. 11–16; Num. 3. 44–51, and similar passages). There is no standard *method.* And even if there were, it is too late in the day for anyone to attempt to hold up thoughtful people at the point of a text, unless that text is clearly aligned with the spirit and truth of Christ. Those who stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free will never believe that because a method was once expected of the Jew it therefore is expected of the Christian. Proof-texts no longer have the power to lord it over us.

Let us note something else about the tithe. It is not the standard method, and there is *no standard motive* that accounts for it! In the fourteenth chapter of Deuteronomy we read that the tithe must be eaten in the sacred place. In case one lived too far to convey it conveniently, he could change it into money and at the sacred place "thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth: and thou shalt eat there before the Lord thy God, . . . thou, and thine household."

(A kindly editor one day appended a postscript, suggesting that the Levites—the religious workers—get a share of it!) That a deity could be pleased with such self-indulgence on the part of his followers seems unbelievable now. We are sure that the God and Father of our Lord would not have it so. He would be happier if his people ascribed to him as well as to themselves that nobler motive for the tithe found in the injunction to keep it in the villages and towns and distribute it among the poor. That would be more like him. The eighteenth of Numbers records a motive more basic still: "And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation." For it is one thing to alleviate poverty and quite another to spiritualize a nation. Public piety will root poverty up and out. But one cannot be certain that the motive credited to God in the "Priestly" code retains his respect for the tithe. We get inklings of a sordid struggle for the possession of the tithes between the priests and the Levites. The priests won out and the record reports God as favoring their

side. With this medley of motives the Old Testament speaks of the tithe! There is no biblical standard; there is *no static statute* on it. The Christian, be it said once more, looks at the Bible through Jesus, and will own no God save the one who lived in him! Thus we know that he is no longer driving money-bargains with Jacobs; instead he is driving out those who try so to bargain with him. We will not believe that with money we can bribe the God of the race. The God of Amos answers the description of the Father of Jesus Christ: "Yea, though ye offer me your burnt-offerings and your meal-offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream." For a tithe is of value only when the right motive is back of it.

It was with the motive and not with the method that Jesus was concerned. Champions of the tithe quote with much approval Christ's mention of the tithe as a requirement of the law which existed in his day; but it seldom occurs to them that there is no more sugges-

tion of approval here than there is suggestion of ridicule in his story of the Pharisee who climaxed his prayer with the boast, "On all my income I pay tithes." Indeed, there is less. The passage is worth studying. In the language of Dr. Weymouth,[4] this is what Jesus said: "Alas for you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you pay the tithe on mint, dill and cumin, while you have neglected the weightier requirements of the Law—just judgment, mercy, and faithful dealing. These things you ought to have done, and yet you ought not to have left the others undone. You blind guides, straining out the gnat while you gulp down the camel! Alas for you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you wash clean the outside of the cup or dish, while within they are full of greed and self-indulgence (uncurbed animal passions)." Here is the picture: "We are shown the man polishing his cup, elaborately and carefully; for he lays great importance on the cleanness of his cup; but he forgets to clean the inside. Most people drink from the inside, but the Pharisee forgot it, dirty as it was, and left it untouched.

[4] *The New Testament in Modern Speech*, Richard Francis Weymouth. The Pilgrim Press, Publishers, Boston.

Then he sets about straining what he is going to drink—another elaborate process; he holds a piece of muslin over the cup and pours with care; he pauses—he sees a mosquito; he has caught it in time and flicks it away; he is safe and he will not swallow it. And then, adds Jesus, he swallowed a camel. How many of us have ever pictured the process, and the series of sensations, as the long, hairy neck slid down the throat of the Pharisee—all that amplitude of loose-hung anatomy—the hump—two humps—both of them slid down—and he never noticed—and the legs—all of them—with whole outfit of knees and big, padded feet. The Pharisee swallowed a camel—and never noticed it."[5] To cull from this masterful statement one phrase: "These things you ought to have done," as an indorsement of tithing *per se* shows how slow of heart we are to understand. By what peculiar twist of logic can a commendation of a deed be made into the recommendation of a percentage? He was discussing their condition rather than their law. They neglected the great for the small, because their vision was dull and their taste

[5] *The Jesus of History*, by T. R. Glover. Association Press, Publishers, New York City.

awry! They were punctilious about tithing, while weightier matters went by the board. It is, rather, as if Jesus had said: "What you need is not a *law of proportion* but a *sense of proportion!*"

Christ's attitude toward money admits of no legalism. The Pharisees took pride in their pious proportioning. But Jesus saw that their careful casuistry fostered ethical dualism. They scrupulously set apart a tenth of the tiny kitchen herbs, and then devoured widows' houses despite their long prayers. Tithing itself is not Christian; only the viewpoint of Jesus can ever make it so. Jesus has a disquieting habit of thinking in totality. His mind always unified concepts. He saw things steadily and he saw them whole. He knew that our hearts and our treasures keep steady company. He does not get us until he gets ours. Hence the testing exaction placed upon the fine young man who had always kept the law: "Sell all you have; give the money to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, take up the cross, and follow me." This command proved too much for the youth; it makes us squirm to-day! It is, alas! not true that a fool and his money are soon parted;

a fool and his money stay close. When Zacchæus, head of taxgatherers, made the promise: "I will give the half of all I have, Lord, to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody I will give him back four times as much," Christ perceived at once that salvation had come to that house. Suppose now that Zacchæus had promised to pay the tithe! Would that have burst Christ's enthusiasm into conflagration? Let a man catch Christ's conviction about life and at once his percentage shifts from the basis of a rule to the basis of ability; nay, *to the basis of love.* This accounts for the shout of triumph that leaped from the lips of our Lord one day as "he watched the people putting their money into the treasury. A number of the rich were putting in large sums; but a poor widow came up and put in two little coins amounting to a halfpenny. And he called his disciples and said to them, 'I tell you truly, this poor widow has put in more than all who have put their money into the treasury; for they have all put in their contribution out of their surplus, but she has given out of her neediness all she possessed, her whole living.' " If we have ears to hear, we know that he still invites our attention to such impractical per-

sons to-day. But many are reluctant to listen; it is discomfiting and we must keep sane. . . . It is expensive to be an expansive soul. But since we must be religious, we compromise on the tithe! That pleases God and does not hurt the "middle-class" citizens' comfort. Thus we choke on the mosquito and gulp down the camel, while once again

> " . . . upon the Tree,
> Christ's wounds break in fresh agony."[6]

*The tithe as a legalistic requirement is alien to the spirit of Christ.* The subsequent history of the tithe is unsavory. Space does not permit its full recital here. A reference or two must suffice. In the early church the custom of consecrating to religious purposes a tenth of the income was voluntary. It was made obligatory by the Council of Tours (567) and the second Council of Macon (585) enjoined its payment under pains of excommunication. Charlemagne extended the practice to all of his domain. The Popes, whose business acumen was usually far superior to their spiritual concern, welcomed with open arms this effective

[6] "The Churches." *The Vision Splendid*, by John Oxenham, Copyright, 1917. George H. Doran Company, Publishers.

method of financial buttressing. Where papal power waned the clergy were nothing loath to avail themselves of it. Things came to such a pass in England that when a peasant died the priest would visit the home, not to comfort the bereaved, but to claim the best cow and the coverlet of the bed, or to collect the deceased's outer garment! The church, or, rather, the clergy became holders of property of immense value in consequence of the tithe. Because of this, probably more than because of the spiritual influence, they came to a large share of political power. One could write an interesting thesis on the proposition that the social gospel was prevented from coming to expression by the wealth the clergy had. Read how in France (in the Estates General of 1789) the clergy joined hands with the nobility to defeat the "third estate," though this proved a case where the worm turned in resistless wrath. Not infrequently the church, with its financial prowess, humbled governments. One cause for the Reformation was the wish of States to get free from the domination the church was able to impose by its economic strength. Yet not even the Reformation could remove the blight. In Protestant countries the tax for the clergy

continued, and the basis was usually the tithe.[7] A study of the "state" churches is illuminating as to the financial opportunism of their leaders, whatever the creed they confessed. Not until 1869 were tithes totally abolished in England under the Disestablishment Act. It is conceivable, of course, that the tithe might have gone to good purposes instead of for the aggrandizement of the leaders of the church. The abuse of the tithe does not argue the injustice of paying it. The point we are making, however, is that those who talk of the tithe as a "historic revelation" of the will of God will find history laughing at them!

It might also be argued that the tithe idea works considerable damage to-day. But thus far our train of thought has been largely negative. It will be conducive to healthy mindedness if we resort to the positive now. *There is hope for the tithe!* Thousands of devout people practice the giving of it. They do so in high devotion to the democracy of God. They believe that the church has a program through which the world can be

[7] The point was hardly anywhere made that the exaction of the tithe is reprehensible. Only the Anabaptists in Switzerland asserted that Christians owed no tithes. Luther held that tithes should be paid to the temporal sovereigns.

saved. In the presence of those fine souls whose income is below normal, and who yet out of their necessity contribute a tenth to God's work, it behooves every thoughtful person to uncover his head and be reverent. The world is getting better because it is giving better. Tithing has been overrated, but it is quite possible to underrate it too. It has a practical aspect which no one can gainsay. The church's work abroad and at home would fail if these multitudes ceased their payment of the tithe. Were thousands of others to begin tithing now, the church would receive an impetus that would cheer the heart of God. What might not happen in this world were all Christians to give the tenth of their income for a single generation? Given systematic support, the church can belt the globe with the good news of its Lord. Tithing to this purpose has a glory that cannot be dimmed! At least with one tenth of one's income one thus does the Christian thing. Some protest against tithing because they do not *wish* to give so much to the church or to any cause. Their protests reek to heaven. There are people who never voluntarily peruse any tale of sacrifice, whose ears never willingly admit

speech on generosity. They deem themselves too practical to be so sentimental. They hold it better to receive than to give. Their ailment is enlargement of the acquisitive instinct, which, being interpreted, is ensmallment of the soul. The walls of stinginess, erected for self-protection, treacherously shut out the breath of life, so that the soul starves long before the body does. In the temple of the spirit, where song and service should companion life, only the blasphemy of greed resounds by day and night!

> "But shop each day and all night long!
> Friend, your good angel slept; your star
> Suffered eclipse; fate did you wrong!
> From where these sort of treasures are
> *There* should our hearts be: Christ, how far!"

There can be no doubt that for people in moderate circumstances this percentage provides a *working basis* for benevolence—though *not* a rigid rule. Indeed, one might go further. After a pastorate of several years in an industrial group, the writer cannot recall a single instance of a person tithing for a reasonable period of time to whom it did not prove of genuine benefit! Always there is a new *joy*

and a new *thrift:* joy in the consciousness of self-denial for an unselfish cause; thrift from the living within one's income which such sacrifice begets. To be sure

> " . . . thrift itself
> May be a sort of slow, unwholesome fire,
> That eats away to dust the life that feeds it."[8]

But that occurs when thrift means the selfishness that keeps, not when thrift means the sacrifice that spends. That people "make money" on tithing is easy to understand. In the truest sense of the word, the habit makes them thrifty. It is this latter fact that makes people say that they make money on tithing. Who, then, shall make bold to advise people against it? One may well hesitate to devote less than this proportion for the purpose of maintaining and increasing the efficiency of the church and other agencies for the social good. Since for the educating of children, concepts must be made concrete, the tenth may well serve as an example and as a basis of their support of altruistic work. *But the tithe becomes a danger if it leaves us too much*

[8] Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company from *Collected Poems*, by Edwin Arlington Robinson.

*for ourselves.* More than six per cent of the people in the United States receive an annual income of three thousand dollars or over. The large proportion of this six per cent is within the Christian Church. All things being equal, this is sufficiently in excess of the "standard wage" for the average family, to make some proportion larger than the tenth the fair share of support of Christ's cause. But neither a church nor a creed has the right to dictate the basis. The service the tithe performs is that of a working basis for the most of us. It is the practical safeguard which we impose upon ourselves to protect the finances of the Kingdom. Of course there are dangers. Some preach tithing, or practice it, on the basis of the dividends it will yield. Tithing thus becomes acquisitive rather than altruistic. Tithing sometimes fosters a sense of self-righteousness. It comes to be regarded as an end and not a means. But the larger conception of stewardship, which we try to study here, will save us from these snares.

If there is hope for the tithe, there is also hope for the tither. Even though he began his habit in response to some wild advocacy of legalism, he need not tarry on that level.

A low motive often proves the gateway to a high one. Most of us started school just because we had to, while to-day we study for the love of it. If we started to tithe, from fear of breaking God's law, or even for its heralded returns, we may henceforth give for the sake of saviourhood! One had better err on the side of generosity than against it. But once the error is evident we should forthwith walk in the light.

The chapter should not conclude until mention has been made of the habit of giving the major portion of one's proportion to the church itself. This is justifiable, because *the church can be trusted now!* This does not mean, of course, that all of its agents can. Glaring exceptions can be found. In connectional bodies, "district superintendents," secretaries, and others are likely to judge a church by the money it raises instead of the work it does. Accordingly, such worthies pay appropriate homage to pastors and to churches where the funds abound, but they have scant love for the churches that fail in the quotas desired. But the church at large can be trusted. *It now realizes that it is in business not to receive money but to interpret it, not to collect property*

*but to correct life.* But this very interpretation requires money and much of it. It is for this reason that such financial stress has been laid in the campaigns of recent years. On the whole, the results have been wholesome. Our financial achievements—and greater are on the way—have startled us into a consciousness of our potentialities. We feel acclimated to the Herculean. We realize that our time and talent, our treasure and thought, have the right to giant tasks. It is now a popular pastime to banish the word "failure" from our vocabulary. We have had a rebirth of confidence. If contributions do not now come in as fast as they should, this is due, not to inability but to ignorance of the work and the need. We have set out with great *éclat* and with much heraldry upon our evangelistic heritage; and *we dare not fail.* This is worth while; *nothing* is more worth while!

And now let us summarize what we have discussed thus far. We have seen that frequently stewardship has been confused with tithing. Extravagant claims have been made on behalf of the tithe. These claims are not sustained by Scripture or history. The tithe as a working basis for the support of Chris-

tian work has wrought enormous good. But tithing, by itself, is not stewardship. It may be the expression, but also the repression, of our sense of stewardship. It may be a sop to conscience or it may be a work of love. What it is depends totally upon what our stewardship means. To the mission of stewardship, then, let us next give thought.

"The Realm of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field; the man who finds it hides it and in his delight goes and sells all he possesses and buys that field.

"Again, the Realm of heaven is like a trader in search of fine pearls; when he finds a single pearl of high price, he is off to sell all he possesses and buy it."—*Jesus.*

"... To forget
For this large prodigality of gold
That larger generosity of thought—
These are the fleshly clogs of human greed,
The fundamental blunders of mankind."
—*Edward Arlington Robinson.*[1]

"The idea of the *moral law* is being replaced by the idea of the *moral end.* This moral end is the common good, of which goodness is not the only element, although the most valuable, for it includes all the higher interests of a society. The common good cannot be separated from, as it is dependent on the total conditions—physical, economic, social, political—that affect the peril or security, the misery or prosperity, the weal or woe of the society." —*Alfred E. Garvie.*[2]

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[1] Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company, from "Octaves" *Collected Poems,* p. 107, by Edwin Arlington Robinson.

[2] *The Purpose of God in Christ,* p. 65, Alfred E. Garvie. Hodder and Stoughton, Publishers, New York.

## CHAPTER V

## STEWARDSHIP AND PROPERTY

THERE is but one gospel. We often speak of two. But even when we do, it is to emphasize their oneness. For years the gospel was applied to the individual. But persons, like texts, are not good if detached: their setting accounts for their worth. "No man liveth unto himself." He stands related to others and to all. He must act toward the society that acts upon him. Hence we speak of the social gospel. But neither the individualistic gospel nor the social gospel is the gospel by itself. It requires the two sides for the one gospel. The gospel is the good news of the reign of God. It can never be anything else. No one and nothing is excluded from this reign. The God of personality is the God of society. Every realm must own him Lord.

The gospel proclaims that property must promote personality. Stewardship *does* with property what the gospel asks. *Stewardship is the practice of property for the purposes of*

*God.* If you prefer sociological language to this theological phrase, stewardship is the functional, rather than the acquisitive, use of property. But perhaps it is better still to put it into words that admit of no doubt. Stewardship is the Christian use of *things*. Superior definitions may suggest themselves. What is important to remember about it is that stewardship is the *act* of a Christian attitude; that it is the *conduct* of Christian character concerning possessions. It is not merely a question of how much of our money we give to the church. To be sure, it involves this question. But far more is involved. Stewardship is the *ethic* of the gospel as regards property.

Notice that the words "property" and "possessions" are used interchangeably. Will not this lead to confusion? There is a deal of property that is not in our possession. What have we to do with that? It is one thing to say that stewardship should apply to "my" property. But how can one make a Christian use of things he does not possess? More will be said about this question in another place. But a moment's reflection will remind us that we use many things we do not own. We either pay for their use, or in other ways we

influence their power and their value. How, then, shall we exempt this from the range of our stewardship? An idea, said William James, becomes true when it fits into the totality of our experience. Stewardship fits into property wherever it touches our lives.

But when we speak of property, complicated questions come. A definition covering, or, what is more important, uncovering, all the facts is difficult to find. It requires thought to learn what may properly be called property. To confine property to "matter" might once have sufficed. But it cannot in our day. Just where lies the line of demarkation between matter and mind, and whether there is such a line, are headache-provoking questions philosophers revel in. At present the biologists seem to be battering down "the middle wall of partition" between matter and life. By the invasion of the electron the ground has been cut from under old-line atheism. We have moved from a static to a dynamic view of things. Or, to speak more accurately, we are so moving.

There are times when property is unrecognized as such. Until very recently, our coke makers ignorantly wasted "on the desert air"

some seven hundred thousand tons of ammonium salts each year. They did not know the value of their waste. Many things once "cast as rubbish to the void" are now put to our service. Sometimes what is clearly property is not thought of as such. What do we own more certainly than these bodies of ours, and what is there in regard to which we need stewardship more? We need to remember and never forget that these bodies are God's bodies; he owns them; we possess them. It is a sobering reflection that we are all and always living in God's house. God does not always serve writs to eject us when we defile it. We dwell in the house of the Lord by dwelling in these bodies and all too frequently we prove undesirable tenants! Yet when we speak of property we do not usually include our bodies. We have fallen into the habit of serious omissions in our talk of property.

Since stewardship has such vast concern with property, we must guard against one-sided discussions of it. Harvey Reeves Calkins, whose book *A Man and His Money* is monumental in the history of the stewardship movement, says: "Property and wealth do

not inhere in land or houses or crops or merchandise, but in something else that has neither form nor substance, yet has immense power to influence these material things. Some invisible element touches property and it stands upon its feet, it moves and throbs with life; but when that element is withdrawn property falls back again, a dead and inert thing. That invisible element is value. It cannot be fully defined nor wholly analyzed; it can only be observed in its effects, and the manner of its working remembered. Value in property is like life in a man, like music in a harp, like steam in a cylinder, like electricity in a coil of wire. . . . Not dead things, whatsoever they are, but the vital element that moves them—this is property. When that vital element departs property ceases. The essence of property is value." Now it is a good thing to be reminded of the value *in* property. We have not thought of it enough. But, in order to do so, it is not necessary for us to forget the value *of* property. There must be land before there can be land-value. Value depends on possibilities. You cannot use stones for bread or chloroform for molasses. True, there are values apart from things. In

many respects religion is value. In the deeper realms of life are values things do not touch. This is the subtle truth suggested in the pun that preachers are poor but well-connected. There are values apart from things. But apart from things there is no property. Property always means *material things* available for satisfying human wants. We emphasize this fact when we use the term *property*-value. Once note that property *is* things, and it is perfectly in order to say that property *has* value. We could never know the value *of* things unless we had value *and* things. They are inseparable in property. United they stand, divided they fall. All this has bearing on stewardship. The church deals in values. But it cannot deal justly with them until it relates them to things.

Attempt to translate property in personal terms and such a statement as Professor Ely's, that property is "an exclusive right to control an economic good" may stand you in good stead. Only remember to cross-examine this word "exclusive." For it is always *within limitations* that a person has freedom of control over things. These limitations sometimes inhere in the things and at other times in the

values placed upon them. It is just these limitations into which we must inquire. Meanwhile let us note that freedom of control does not mean license.

But it is not enough to know what property may be or what may be done with it. The Christian is concerned with what property *ought* to do; with the function of property. It was Jesus' habit to trace things to their origin. The religionists of his day were strangers to this scientific bent of mind. They went back to tradition, to custom or sacred law. But Jesus went back to God. Seen through the eyes of Jesus, things all run back to God. One hesitates to say that God is the owner of all things when one remembers the bayonet and whisky and the roulette wheel, or that innumerable host of "practical" things that have the form of decency but deny the power thereof. But to Christian thought these things are man's perversions of God's property. Property is God's; this is the Christian insistence, and from it there is no escape. Since the doctrine of evolution has brought home to us the immanence of God, we can never again think of property in a pagan way:

"Draw if thou canst, the mystic line,
Severing rightly his from thine,
Which is human, which divine."

If the transcendence of God leaves us unmoved as to stewardship, his immanence ought to startle us. Shall we use the expression of God for the suppression of his will? "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof," and "property in outward goods is but the outcome of personality; and all human personality is the issue and image of the personality of God. . . . Man's authority to say of anything 'That is mine,' rests finally upon his power to say 'I am God's.' "[1] The fact of God's absolute ownership is fundamental to stewardship.

Now, when a man awakes to the truth that he is *a trustee of God's goods*, it at once becomes clear to him what his property ought to do. For one thing, *he sees that his property should truthfully represent God.* It must cast no reflection upon his character. When a man's money creates the impression that God plays favorites, it belies the conception of God as "no respecter of persons." When

[1] Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company from *Property, Its Duties and Rights*, Essays by Various Authors.

a man so uses his money that for some of his brothers and sisters life is a burdened existence rather than the joyous experience which Jesus said God means, his money lies about God. When property, in whatever hands, fails to bear clear testimony as to the loving fatherliness of the Creator for all his creatures, that property is a power of darkness and smites God in the face. For it then misrepresents God. You do not wonder, do you, that some hide from stewardship behind the skirt of legalistic tithing? Stewardship is a searchlight under which the selfish wince. What is more difficult to understand is why "A Dictionary of Religion and *Ethics*," written by modern men, should not mention it at all. For a man to ask of his holdings that they tell the truth about God is an "impractical" exercise in which Christians may indulge to the welfare of their souls. At any rate, nothing short of this is really stewardship. For another thing, he who practices stewardship must *see to it that his property works the will of God.* Here again is a subject that can only be touched upon here. If the heavenly Father desires that the children under his reign shall receive more abundant life, what shall we say for property that

stunts personality and makes life a mere battle for food? And with what acclaim shall we greet those whose goods work humanity good! Moreover, the trustee of God's goods *will not misrepresent his trusteeship.* He will remember the limited character of his proprietorship. To be sure, taxation and law exist to keep him in mind of this. Yet despite these a surprising number go on the bland assumption of possessive autocracy. The steward of God will not clamor "to do what I will with mine own." His liberty to control things can never turn into license. He will be wary of the popular prattle of "property rights," knowing full well that rights are subservient to right, and that things must not hold sway over personality. He will know that what he owns he owes to God, in creation and history. And the trustee of God's goods *will think more of God than of goods.* Nonstewards, who never can hope to be much more than paganized Christians, emulate their progenitors by seeking chiefly what God *has.* At best their thought soars to God's power. So, when they get into a bad fix, they invoke the power of heaven to help them out of it. When they receive a smash-up from a collision with some

giant sin, they send out an alarm that the wrecking crew of the universe may be rushed to the scene. They call *that* prayer. It stands to reason that God desires our interest in his *things*. All that the heavenly Father has is at the disposal of his children. An earthly father, said Jesus, delights to give good *things* to his children—how much more your Father. Said Paul: All *things* are yours. But though a steward is interested in the things God has, the center of his interest is in what God *is*. That God reveals himself in things has long been a commonplace. We talk of the God of nature and do well so to talk of him. The steward sees that God can reveal himself through property. He is only prevented from doing so by our selfishness. Just yet, while "the heavens declare his glory," the earth fails "to show forth his handiwork," for no good God would distort his property into instruments that impoverish the many and unduly enrich the few. Our money must show us God, to paraphrase Mr. Britling. Just yet our money talks in tones of acquisitiveness. The Christian steward desires it to speak in accents of saviourhood. He wants property to articulate the Personality at the

heart of the universe. Some property is already utilized to do this in whole or in part. If hospitals, churches, schools, and homes voice God, property everywhere must come to proclaim him. The trustee of God's goods will not be content to hear God only in moments of meditation. His God cannot be "cribbed, cabined, and confined" to thought; he invades all of life. You cannot sever his from him. The steward seeks to show God forth in the face of property. Or, to put it in other words, he has the conviction that property ought to do what God wants done. He has an undying resolve that it shall do nothing else! Property is God's; stewardship is the means of exalting him through it. *Wealth must worship*, or at least, must aid in it.

There is a further way of stating what property is given of God to do. *Wealth is a social product and must serve society.* Property has a social *cause.* Society has produced it. It required long generations and unnumbered hosts of people to make possible the things which we value. The material things now available for satisfying our wants root largely in the past. We reap what was sown long ago. At infinite cost and labor our values were pro-

duced. Referring to the past does not mean reverting to it. It does mean acknowledgment of the foundations laid and the structures reared by those who went before. Let no one suppose that property is something the present produced. It is the result of the search and study, the struggle and suffering of multitudes now gone. They made a great investment. We should at least prove to be a fair interest on this investment. Not only has property a social cause, but it has a social *life*. Property would be worthless the moment society ceased. It is only by virtue of society that property is worth having. In this day of complex activities, it should be apparent to all how property is dependent on cooperative life. We usually produce but a tiny part of a product; the rest of the world joins labors to complete and to market it. Manufacture and commerce, to mention but a few, show how impossible it is for property to live a hermit life. Property not only is, but has a social *effect*. Of all things that need to be remembered about it this easily stands first. It is for freedom of control over things that men strive by day and by night. In the meaning of property for society to-day lies chiefly

the disorder of our social order. Now, for the trustee of God's goods this all has significance. *His stewardship for God means stewardship for society.* To him, property will speak eloquently of *the solidarity of sin.* There is not only a biological transmission of sin, but a social transmission of it. The past has its share of guilt in making property anti-social. The present has deep responsibility for justifying, idealizing, and perpetuating greed and for placing economic profit above the pursuit of God. "An enlightened conscience cannot help feeling a growing sense of responsibility and guilt for the common sins under which humanity is bound and to which they all contribute. . . . Whose hand has never been stained with income for which no equivalent has been given in service? How many business men have promoted the advance of democracy in their own industrial kingdom when autocracy seemed safer and more efficient? What nation has never been drunk with a sense of its glory and importance, and which has never seized colonial possessions or developed its little imperialism when the temptation came its way? The sin of all is in each of us, and every one of us has scattered seeds of evil, the final

multiplied harvest of which no man knows."[2] The Christian steward will bring forth fruits worthy of repentance with his property. He will not let his possession sin against the social good. To him property will afford the means for *social saviourhood.* To the extent that he directly controls it he will use it to benefit mankind. He will not be content with tithing even though he may cheerfully tithe. But stewardship will be a policy, not toward a part of one's income, but toward all one owns or exercises influence upon. The other day the representative of the tobacco trust set sail for China. He is reported to have said he was going in the hope that throughout China three lights might be seen everywhere: the light of the gospel, the light of oil, the light of the cigarette. Had the reporter who interviewed him remembered his Sunday-school studies, he might have quoted him Scripture: "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" For the steward, business has no business to group the gospel with greed. His goods must serve good. Wealth must

[2] Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company, from *A Theology for the Social Gospel,* by Walter Rauschenbusch.

be used to bring mankind to Christian manhood.

He has another duty with the resources furnished by God. *Property is an individual product and must develop personality.* "Modern social science shows beyond question that all the wealth of the world really resides in men; that there are no values of any sort apart from men; and that all the values which we know are their creation. Human beings, in other words, are not only the sole source of value, but they are the supreme values. The development of the resources which are in men, therefore, is the only way in which the world can be permanently enriched along any line."[3] Men often say, "Money is myself." What they mean in saying this is that the best of their time and strength, and frequently of their thought, goes into the making of it. And of this there can be no doubt. But to speak of money as "myself" is a poor putting of the matter. For a man is more than his means, unless he has sold out to them!

"One thing is yours you may not spend:
Your very inmost self of all—

[3] Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company, from *The Reconstruction of Religion*, p. 162, by Charles A. Ellwood.

> You may not bind it, may not bend,
> Nor stem the river of your call.
> To make for ocean is its end."[4]

There are those who think that property masters personality. To them "every man has his price," and every woman, virtue and all, is at the mercy of cash. High-priests of mammon auction off bodies and souls at the call of profit. There is a sublime passage in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* that should be read them in church. His owner lashes Tom with the whip—and taunts: "Ain't I yer master? Ain't yer mine now, body and soul? Didn't I pay down twelve hundred dollars for all that is in yer old black shell?" But the soul of Tom was equal to the occasion. He could not be kept down: "No! No!" answered he. "No! No! My soul ain't yours. It's been bought and paid for by One that's able to keep it. No matter! No matter! You can't harm *me!*" There is a superb consciousness of the supremacy of the spiritual begotten within its followers by Christianity which is ominous for the keepers of the house of greed. The trustee of God's goods is a partner with the Lord in *protecting* personality. To the extent of his

[4] Ibsen.

ability, he will employ neither his talents nor those of other men in making goods which no one can make with happiness or without loss of self-respect. He will not, if he can help it, waste his life or the lives of others in functionless acquisitions. It is true, there are staggering problems which no one has thus far solved. One perceives them when he lets industry testify a bit. Man needed clothing and solved the problem by making spinning wheels. The wheel with its revolutions revolutionized all industry. But the existence of the wheels made for the persistence of their use. Their creation compelled their operation. Markets were sought that profit might be had and employment assured. It ceased to be a question of providing shelter from the cold. It has come to be a question of dividends and work. The organized totality of mechanical contrivances compels humanity to keep them going, or else run the risk of perishing. "The economic made to serve the vital now makes the vital serve the economic." The creation of tools solved one problem, but in that solution man created an infinitely bigger one.[5]

[5] For this line of thought the author is indebted to an article written some years ago in *The Hibbert Journal* by Dr. L. P. Jacks.

Just how to protect personality from being less than "a living creature among the wheels" is a mooted question, with which we should all be concerned. The Christian steward would be the last to refuse to give it thought. As far as possible he will utilize property to protect personality. Furthermore, he will utilize property to *project* personality. It will be his concern to make property *creative.* With Browning, he "counts life just the stuff to try the soul's strength on." Property must develop, not envelop, personality. It must build life; it must not break it down. Francis Thompson once shrewdly remarked that "no heathen ever saw the same tree as Wordsworth." Seen through the eyes of the steward, property must augment and promote personality. That a pagan does not see life this way matters not to him. The eye of the steward is single. It is focused on the soul. He must come to expression through his property. He will let his money preach in far off lands. He will let his gifts bring freedom to bodies and minds; and to "spirits in prison," jailed personalities, his wealth will minister. He will use his money to improve his mind, enlarge his heart, strengthen his good will. He will have "queer"

business methods, lest his soul succumb to selfishness. A Christian steward will make his property godlike, and his property, in turn, will make him like his God.

To many this line of reasoning sounds like far-fetched idealism. But to the Christian steward all this is merely sense. "There is no morning" for those who dismiss as visionary the vision which he has:

> "This, this it is to be accursed indeed;
> For if we mortals love, or if we sing,
> We count our joys not by the things we have,
> But by what kept us from the perfect thing."[6]

It may be worth our while to recapitulate. Stewardship is our use of property for God's ends. Property and possessions may be difficult to define, but we clearly mean with them the things we are free to control. Stewardship views this control in the light of three great facts: 1. Property is God's and so it must honor him. 2. Property is social and intended for the advance of society. 3. Property is personal and must help personality to come into its own. It is these commonplace facts Christian stewards never forget. And to this heavenly vision they are not disobedient!

[6] *Collected Poems of Paul Laurence Dunbar.* Copyrighted by Dodd, Mead & Company, Publishers, New York City.

"You know the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men overbear them:

not so with you.

"Whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of man has not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."—*Jesus.*

Oh, brother men, if you have eyes at all,
Look at a branch, a bird, a child, a rose,
Or anything God ever made that grows—
Nor let the smallest vision of it slip,
Till you may read, as on Belshazzar's wall,
The glory of eternal partnership."

—*Edwin Arlington Robinson.*[1]

[1] Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company, from *Sonnet*, Collected Poems, p. 96, by Edwin Arlington Robinson.

## CHAPTER VI

## CREATIVE OWNERSHIP

*Property is a necessity.* If we merely had to exist, the case might be different. If we only needed some arrangement to meet our temporary wants, property problems would scarcely harass us. But it is more than a question of existence. It is a question of life. To live we must have freedom to realize ourselves. Some degree of liberty must be ours for individual action. We must be able to make plans; to arrange life in accordance with them; to choose; to have reasonable expectation as to the result of the choice. For all of which we must have control over some things. These things we must be absolutely able to count on; no one must have the power to take them from us. If we could only keep what we are strong enough to defend, there would be neither liberty nor guarantee of life. Property is a means toward a full life. Stewardship recognizes that property is a necessity for every one. Necessary, that is, as a means, not

an end of life. And it recognizes the disparity between the need and the social order which exists to supply the need. Under feudalism the child was born into a system in which there was some assured basis for a livelihood. But to-day "five out of every six children are born to no assured place in our industrial system."[1] Of their own, they have no means of subsistence. The "blessing" of poverty is often recited. But those of us who have experienced it know that this blessing all too easily becomes a curse. That the struggle for existence has its compensations no one can doubt; but when the struggle is hopeless, when it never finds fruition in fullness of life, the soul is crushed by the very thing that was meant to set it on high. No person of sense will plead for effortless careers. But when most folks are compelled to put most of their energy into obtaining a tool, property, rather than a goal, personality, grave injustice is done to life. This enforced, perpetual plodding at the scaffolding of life stewardship deplores. It has a fellow feeling with Jesus for those who are thus bound with "heavy burdens, grievous to be borne."

[1] Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company, from *Property, Its Duties and Rights*, p. 22, Essays by Various Authors.

It shares his belief that the reign of God ought to be the primary interest of life. It abhors any system that gives an exaggerated prominence to property. Jesus suggested that such a state of affairs may do well enough for pagans; but in the Christian order of things it will never do. Property is a tool rather than a task; and stewardship is concerned that every child of God shall have this implement.

To put this differently, *we have the right to property*. On this all men agree. Both the greedy and the idealists are at one concerning this. Even Communism does not attempt to abolish property. It merely attempts to reduce to a minimum the private use of it. The aim of Socialism is not the extinction of private property, but the extinction of private capital —quite a different thing, to which we shall later allude. This acknowledgment all along the line of man's right to property is based, of course, on the recognition of its necessity. This right is not limitless. No person has the right to own what ought to go to others. But every person has the right to enough to assure fullness of life. When the steward knows, as he ought to, that a majority of the people in the world still go hungry for physical needs,

let alone the higher needs, while they hunger and thirst far too little for righteousness, he knows that somewhere there is meddling with the prerogatives of life. In the light of budget estimates and government statistics, eighty per cent of the incomes in our country are seen to be inadequate to keep those dependent upon them in the ordinary comforts of life. This ought to convince the most skeptical that property is not used in the way God intends it to be. The steward has this conviction by way of the spirit of Christ. In the name of the realm of God he enters his protest.

But he does not rest with this. There are at least two assertions which he is bound to make. The first of these is that *there are no property rights.* This needs to be said out loud and frequently these days. As with life, so with a word; it is possible to denude a content of all simile to intent. But even for shadowy meanings there is no excuse. These "rights" are so derivative, so relative, so conditional that to call them "rights" serves only to sustain a popular fallacy. No existent superstition slanders sanity more. Stewardship has a beneficent influence on one's vocabulary. One's words get the single eye; they

wear no masks; they are shorn of double meanings; they do not "double cross." For the steward there are no rights that do not root in right; and there is no right apart from God and humanity and us. Things are non-moral; things can have no rights, only persons can. This discrimination is inherent in stewardship. It offends the acquisitive; they look for another church! But it must be made, without fear or favor. "That detachment of a man's heart from all material wealth which Christ so solemnly inculcates and that love for one's neighbor as oneself which he makes central in true religion, alike rebuke all self-assertive claims for the rights of property."[2] Property, like the Sabbath, was made for man; *not man for property.*

But there is more to do than to deny property rights. Stewards make such negative statements only as correctives of thought. They make a positive assertion that gets to the bottom of things: *Duties must precede rights.* Men who extol property rights often mean ownership rights. It is because of this that they relish their talk of rights; although their

[2] Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company, from *Property, Its Duties and Rights*, pp. 98, 99, Essays by Various Authors.

speech sometimes suggests whistling to keep courage up. Blast property rights if you must; but how are you going to answer our claim to ownership? It is at this point that stewardship sees clear and steadily. We but have the right to own in order to do our duty! "We need a new Revolution," says Professor Edwin Grant Conklin.[3] "The disharmonies of society and the conflicts of interests and minds and purposes, have come largely from the exalting of individual rights over social obligations. We need a new Revolution which will enforce the *duties* of man, as our former Revolution emphasized the *rights* of man. How easily the disharmonies of society could be silenced, and the conflicts between individuals and classes and nations could be settled, if men were taught to think more of their duties and less of their rights!"

*There can be no ownership apart from obligation.* Indeed, it is rather pretentious in us to refer to ourselves as owners. The writer was once accosted by a large employer whose wrath could not be stayed! Some young lady, fresh from college, had deigned to visit him. Guess

[3] *The Direction of Human Evolution*, p. 122. Charles Scribner's Sons, publishers, New York City.

what she did! She began to assail the citadel of his proprietorship with the sixteen-inch guns of sociology. "Would you believe it?" he flashed at me, as fury flashed in his eyes. "That girl kept up an incessant chatter about the unearned increment." Before this the unearned increment had meant nothing in his life. He might not have recognized it if it had been written all over the property where all the time it was! If social science can reveal that what we own owes its value to society rather than to the work of our hands, how much more can the religion of Christ make this clear to us! "Ye are not your own, for ye were bought with a price." There is the investment of God to consider; it is his purpose we are debtor to. Stewardship comes to adjust our scale of values. With Christians, God heads the list, and life comes a close second; or we are none of his.

So it comes that *we have a right to such property as we have the right to use.* To grammarians this will sound like tautology. We are afraid that it is, but there seems no escaping it. The best of thinkers have ransacked language to express the thought in their minds. Yet they have been unable to compose a

phrase to obviate the clumsy putting to which we here resort. Professor Hobhouse talks of "property for use" and "property for power." Men like Gore and Rauschenbusch have utilized this distinction. But it leaves much to be desired. Talk of property for use and the question arises, For whose use and what, or for how long and much? For it is both the kind and the degree of use stewardship asks about. Talk of property for power and at once you remember that property *is* power; that there is constant confusion of power and force; that much property for power is force by which the many are compelled to serve the few. Property at its best gives us control over things for life, and not control over life for things!

But just how are we going to draw the line? Here is a problem that baffles the brainiest. Just at what juncture self-realization becomes self-aggrandizement is difficult to tell. The difficulty is aggravated by the difference in needs in various social conditions. To function usefully, a biologist needs more property than a baker. A philosopher will need more books than a bookkeeper; a farmer more ground than a fisherman. One who

has lived in crowded quarters will have the profound conviction that the ownership of pianos should be strictly confined to those who were predestined to play! But how is one going to tell? Some things, moreover, are more truly ours than other things can be. Ideas, inventions, literary and musical productions are more nearly personal. Just where one's self-expression gets into the way of others it is not easy to know. But to one fixed star we may cling. *Property must serve personality.* In other words, it must be judged in the light of its social effectiveness. Does property so preoccupy a person that he is thereby prevented from fulfilling the obligations of parenthood? Does it make him inconsiderate; does it blind him to the needs of others; does it make him forgetful that every one else has the right to a full-orbed life? Then property is a millstone about that man's soul. Does it enable him to do some effective piece of service; to be filial; to have reverence for life? Then property is a tool of God in worthy hands. Experience and exigency will likely always have to determine how much property one can privately properly use. But this is a criterion which sheds a flood

of light on property to-day. It is clear that much of our property now dwarfs personality. And it is our Christian duty to see that it is made to serve.

The steward tries to approximate the actual to the ideal. He does not feel free to dispense with the grace of introspection. He takes this matter to heart. And he has a question to ask of all who have ears to hear. Or, better, he has two questions with which to search the soul: "What use have you the right to make of property?" "What use do you make of it?" Both of these questions must also be faced in the light of larger things. The first question has been discussed and further treatment awaits it. But the second question is pertinent at this juncture. It is a fashion with business people to talk of capital and income. Salaried and working people have their direct control limited to the latter. Suppose, then, we limit this question to the use one makes of his income. Let private stewardship practice engage our thought. There is a subtle danger in looking upon one's income as something strictly private, to do with what we will. Self-indulgences break down personality. Extravagance is the expenditure of money with-

out a sense of obligation. No one can come to his best without volitional sacrifice. And the question of the selfish use of one's income at once suggests the opposite use of it. Now, once one feels that property must further personality, one is bound to be drawn in heart to the program of the church. For here is an institution that, despite its many failures, has insistently asserted the immortal worth of the soul. It does not lift men from things but above things. It gives them God. It is here, and not in tithing, that the argument comes in for the support of the cause of Christ. The consciousness of God is the topmost need of life. The steward feels that God comes first in all his property. It is not a question of the firstfruits, the first portion; it is a question of the fruit of the Spirit, the first proportion. "In all things giving Him preeminence." The world needs God; our money can bring him to men. The world needs his reign; our money can build up his democracy. Is one tenth of one's earnings excessive to give to a cause like this? The outcome of our income must be the success of Christ's cause.

Let us see how far we have come. We have seen that social spirituality expresses itself in

stewardship. The tithe, though it may help, does not suffice as a measure of our stewardship. Trusteeship must come to expression in all property. Property has no rights; it must be rightly used. To be partners with God in winning the world to the life of Christ we must strive to bring all things into subjection to his will.

"A rich man's estate bore heavy crops. So he debated, 'What am I to do? I have no room to store my crops.' And he said, 'This is what I will do. I will pull down my granaries and build larger ones, where I can store all my produce and my goods. And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have ample stores laid up for many a year; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry."' But God said to him, 'Foolish man, this very night your soul is wanted; and who will get all you have prepared?' So fares the man who lays up treasure for himself instead of gaining the riches of God." —*Jesus.*

"Industrial work, still under bondage to Mammon, the rational soul of it not yet awakened, is a tragic spectacle. . . . Yet courage: . . . Labor is not a devil, even while encased in Mammonism; Labor is ever an imprisoned god, writhing unconsciously or consciously, to escape out of Mammonism! . . . Blessed and thrice-blessed symptoms I discern of Master-Workers who are not vulgar men; who are Nobles, and begin to feel that they must act as such: all speed to these."—*Thomas Carlyle.*

## CHAPTER VII

## ACQUISITIVE OWNERSHIP

The acquisitive habit is the arch foe of stewardship. The person who is afflicted with acute accumulativeness has an anti-Christian estimate of *property.* In the ritual for the communion service God is described as One "whose property is always to have mercy." The man who framed that phrase wrote better than he knew. That this is a function of property many seem unable to grasp. The truth needs be stretched not one whit to assert that man's property is often merciless. Both the brother who opined that all men are liars and the man who averred that property is robbery generalized the truth out of countenance. Yet much that by the rule of man is legalized property in the light of the reign of God is seen to be downright robbery. The Christian holds that property must serve God in man. Thus, when a man seeks property without regard to the will of God his estimate goes

astray. He then confuses the means with the end. Acquisition irrespective of service is in many circles still deemed respectable. Men who hold this view are singularly blind to the wrongs done *with* property and peculiarly sensitive to wrongs done *to* property. Property becomes the golden calf to which they expect all and sundry to make obeisance. This species of idolatry denaturates the soul. One loses the ability to differentiate between the good and evil uses of property. One thinks of property as something static, "without variableness or shadow cast by turning," at the mention of which it is immediately incumbent on us all to show respect. Because of the obstinacy of this estimate men to whose financial interest it is that peace prevail in the industrial world unintentionally keep it in turmoil. This inability to discriminate in the realm of property was recently illustrated when a representative of the coal mine owners testified before the Senate Committee on Education and Labor. Speaking about the United Mine Workers, whose belief in the nationalization of mines he confessed having in mind, he said: "Mr. Chairman, we just as much decline to talk with them . . . as we would decline to

sit down and talk with a robber or any other man who told us that when he got the power he intended to take our property away from us. There is no use of discussing with a man whose aim and object is to take away your property, when he can." And further: "I believe we would be justified" (in discharging a man who announces his faith in the union) "because we know that he would be like a man coming into your house—if that man told you, to begin with, that before he got out he intended to rob your house, I do not care how pleasant he was when he came in. . . . And we keep out organizers of the United Mine Workers for exactly the same reason that those whose pictures are in the rogues' gallery are kept out of lower New York." Note the delinquency of this viewpoint! He compared men who wished to nationalize mines (at equitable reimbursement) to men who steal the treasures of one's home! As if property for profit and property for personality were always one and the same thing! It does seem as if no person should be allowed to be an employer of labor or have extensive control over the tools of production who has not passed a satisfactory examination both as to character and intelligence. It is

even more tragic when labor leaders have this defective view. The lack of discrimination is, alas! all too prevalent among them. Their shortsightedness infects the multitudes for whom they should be eyes. There are few ways in which a steward can better serve his day than in spreading the Christian estimate of property and in helping to keep clear the distinction between property used for profit and property for service.

The acquisitive habit also begets a wrong estimate of *rights*. In Christianity, love is right. Growth in God, filial conduct, satisfaction in service—these are the Christian prerogatives. These are the essential rights every person has. But when greed moves in God moves out. Then comes the conflict of rights! The creed of selfishness asserts that *the right to accumulate is quite limitless*. It is unfortunate that this has come to be known as the capitalistic view, for this has the implication that it is confined to capitalists. Many a poor person has greed for his creed. And many a self-righteous member of our fortunate middle-class owns to this outlook on life. When labor-leaders leave good-sized fortunes the suspicion will not down that they were of

kindred mind. Many in all walks of life make this the basis for daily conduct. It is often camouflaged by toning down the words in which the assertion is made. You frequently hear men talk of "the right to the product of one's labor." But no one has this right! It is the philosophy of grab and get. A man must contribute toward life as well as get something out of it. But suppose a man had the right to all that he produced. It would then become a question of how much is *really* his. For materials and machinery are traceable to God and the work of other men; in this complex day production is not so simple as he assumes. It has been suggested that for mental exercise, which would not be without its spiritual benefits, a man should attempt to apportion aright the labor in the suit he wears. How much credit should go to the shepherd who tended the sheep, to the worker in wool, to the transportation agents who brought it to the mill, to the person who wove the cloth, to the bookkeeper or manager of the mill where it was woven, to the merchant who brought it to market, to the tailor who fashioned it—and this does not exhaust the list; or he might figure out to how much states-

man, soldier, school-teacher, policeman, are severally entitled for the indirect services rendered to make his suit possible! Less frequently, in our day, the acquisitive habit is defended as "the right to competition." But this manifestly depends upon what we are competing for; whom we are competing with; and whether all competitors have an even chance to compete. If we strive to excel in service, we accord with the will of Christ; but if we strive to gain by advantage over the weak, we have no part in him. If some men are "damned into the world," as Maeterlinck portrayed, while other men find their lines cast in pleasant places, either by virtue of heredity or environment, or because some "windfall" lands just where they are, the situation cannot appeal to our sense of fairness. This right to all one can get founders on other rocks. Property is of social character. Money would be worthless but for society—and stable government. Wealth is a cooperative achievement. Theft becomes honor the moment we concede that a person has the right to appropriate whatever he can lay his hands on. Stewardship comes to smite the acquisitive claims hip and thigh. To it these rights are wrongs!

Men are not holders of rights, they are trustees for God.

The acquisitive habit begets a wrong estimate of *life*. A man's standards become those of profit instead of purpose. He thinks that the degree of one's efforts depends upon the motive of gain. For him profit is the spur to work. How far afield is this from Jesus! Christ pictured the satisfaction of service as being paramount. But the adherents of acquisition do not see with his eyes. They come to look upon business as the most important thing in life. Business alone is business—other things can await more convenient seasons. That the realm of God should be sought first, is a doctrine reserved for preachers and other unpractical folks. Thus they make the tool of life the task of life, than which there could be no more pathetic perversion. They exalt profit above function. Admiration of the acquisitive has made its way into our literature and law. Not infrequently it pervades the most precious of our relations; so that marriage becomes marketable and families are rent by disputes over bequests. But sadder than the perversion of the ends of life is the perversion of soul. Selfishness is spiritual

suicide. These men fall victim to the ego-complex. Individualism brings them low. Making of one's life all one can regardless of others makes one anti-social. It is only in relationship to others that life can be fulfilled. They are found fighting against themselves when they forget their brothers. They give their lives for what life can give. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his life?"

> "Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
> Where wealth accumulates and men decay."

This wrong estimate results in *wrong ownership.* For now ownership, through control over things becomes *control over life.* If one owns the means of production, he has control over the lives of those who depend on his property for their livelihood. We have been born into an organized system of property where we find the many subjected to the few. Suppose it is too ideal to ask that property shall have mercy and shall thus approximate the character of God. But ought it not to do justice; to give freedom and security to life rather than to make for its enslavement? This is where ownership has gone dreadfully wrong. Multitudes have no adequate measure of

property for use. They have not the security which freedom requires. The control of their livelihood is in the hands of others. As for themselves they are merely "hands" for others. These others have the whip hand. The cards up their sleeves are hunger and fear. Control over *labor* will likely always be necessary. We cannot dispense with the expert, nor with authority. No man should advocate anarchy for the sake of freedom. But control over *life*, which denies men the right to work, to say nothing of creative work, is a blasphemy on brotherliness. This control over life is not always thus direct. It is attempted in realms outside of the sphere of production. In an attempt to protect the system on which profits depend, men seek to dominate pulpit, press, bench, and schoolroom. With the bulk of the wealth in the hands of a few there is always danger that these social agencies shall account themselves dependent on them. Here is an item to which the forward-looking person may well give heed. The payment of the tithe on the part of most church members could free these agencies from the possibility of having their freedom of thought and speech curbed to protect a system against which in

the name of Christ they should of right protest. This control over life leads to the assumption that those who own are the natural rulers of those who do not. *Always there has been an economic basis for politics.* One who discerns the signs of the times may be sure that men will not much longer permit their livelihood to be dependent upon the caprice of some individual. Property has no claim which is valid against the natural and fundamental right of every man to enjoy the bounty of the Creator. When property thus is able to control the lives of men it becomes theft. For

> " . . . you take away my life,
> When you do take the means whereby I live,"

and this is true, even though it was Shylock who said it. For some men, this desire for control over life has more fascination than the control over resources. They can think of no greater thrill than to be able to say, like the army-captain who came to Jesus: "Go, and he goes; . . . come, and he comes; . . . do this, and he does it." The dictatorship, and not the docility, carries the charm. It appeals to the monarch-mind.

Stewards must note the prevalence of *absentee*

*ownership*. Here the shades of deism haunt us! If one has enough capital, he does not need to conduct his business. He can "hire brains," and frequently does. This has certain results the steward must cope with. For here owners shift from the productive to the financial interest in life. Thus we get passive property: for which a man does not work, but which works for him. From it people get income without rendering service. True, there are owners whose absence is enforced: dependent people whose lot is cast in other places and who have neither the ability nor opportunity to properly participate in the conduct of the business which they partly own. This wide and apparently inevitable distribution of stock among widows and dependents, employees and people of average means, makes the problem the more acute. For these all invest to get. They levy tax on the labors of others. Back in 1848 Mill said: "In no sound theory of private property was it ever contemplated that the proprietor of land should be merely a sinecurist quartered on it." But here are property pensioners who at a distance reap the benefits of an industry for which they bear little or no responsibility. And this intensifies

the view that regards property primarily as an instrument for profit. For them gain has scant relation to service and power scarcely any to responsibility. Property thus spells privilege and privilege is a right minus a function; which being interpreted means a wrong right! Its further sin is that it subordinates creative activity to passive property. "To have enough to live *on*" becomes the ideal; "to have enough to live *with*" becomes an inferior state, from which no one must forego an opportunity to escape. Graft is nobler than function in a viewpoint such as this. One can easily guess what influence such a viewpoint has on youth!

By way of this absentee ownership we encounter the *financier*. He deals in the shares and stocks of this capital. Those who purchase them from him generally do so with an eye to dividends, and not to creative service. But the financier has a genius for larger things. Through his fertile mediation the trust has come to life. Now comes what one is tempted to call an even more intimate thing than the direct control of life. First was control over the producer; now comes control over the consumer. First such purchasing power as a

man managed to get was left unmolested; now it is invaded. Both output and prices can now be controlled. You buy at the figure fixed, or may not buy at all. It is the function of industry to supply us with instruments for the pursuit of goodness, truth, and beauty; now, these very instruments turn highwaymen. Better things, of course, can be said for the financier. Some deserve our praise for the spirit and scope of their work. As Bishop McConnell well says: "There is something of social service in the accumulation of funds to be used productively even though we cannot accurately indicate the limits of the service. The ability to get money together may be a social virtue. When we reflect upon the almost inevitable tendency of money to get away from the ordinary man we must concede at least a measure of justification . . . in the social service rendered in the gathering of the funds and in their conservation. This, of course, is not intended as an exoneration of exorbitant or dishonest returns, nor is it intended as justification for saddling on industry the burden of making profits for 'water' or monopoly values."[1] But

[1] Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company, from *Church Finance and Social Ethics*, by F. J. McConnell.

for the purpose of this chapter we need to note how frequently financiers further acquisitiveness. Lynn Harold Hough says truly: "When a man invents an instrument which humanity needs, and as a result secures large returns, he is receiving the reward of actual productiveness. When a man applies his mind to making the largest use of existing instruments of value he is in effect adding to their number. But when a man by deft manipulation secures such control of the market or such a relation to certain stocks that he secures a return without rendering a corresponding service, he is not a producer. In a very ignoble sense he is a manipulator. He is a parasite. The world really has a harder lot because he is living in it and all his gains have an odor about them which the real producer recognizes with distaste." The power wielded by these manipulators with their amazing "corner" on credit staggers imaginings. Can this stupendous power rightly stay in the hands of these men? Will it ever be possible for Wall Street to be the street called Straight?

Proprietorship in absentia requires for its existence the employment of *management.* Management in itself is of splendid usefulness.

It is functional, directive, constructive. But management under this system becomes a different thing. The financial interests put management in the saddle, but do not permit it to hold the reins! Managerial success is measured not by the degree of service into which it guides production and steers industry, but by the proportion of profits at which the goods are produced. Whether they "sell it dear" or whether, like some corporations, they have been able by the clubbing of their resources to produce a commodity cheaper and better than if it were manufactured outside of the combine, the criterion for most managers remains to "make it cheap," so far as labor is concerned. This makes for exploitation first of those who labor and next of those who buy. When managers are obligated to provide profits, not service, for their seen and unseen employers, they are sure to become heartless and dull to the sense of right.

Thought needs also to be given to the ownership of *capital:* the tools of production or the means of exchange; land, realty, machinery, money. Capitalism is the private control of this capital (private may mean one person or one class). Stewardship remembers that cap-

ital is a thing—a thing for a task. It should be at the service of life, life should not be at the service of it. Capital should help industry to help men. "Those who own it should no more control production than a man who lets a house controls the meals which shall be cooked in the kitchen, or the man who lets a boat the speed at which the rowers shall pull."[2] "A society is rich when material goods, including capital, are cheap and human beings dear. Indeed, the word 'riches' has no other meaning."[3]

And thus we see how ownership comes to be divorced from service. This economic egotism breaks down all moral boundaries. It is forgetful of function. It does not come under the tongue of true Christian report. That "the greatest is he who serves" is alien language to it. But whatever it forgets, the steward must remember what property is for: to let men live at their best. And if it does not do that, "there is no morning for it."

The acquisitive habit results not only in wrong valuations and in wrong ownership, but it results in *wrong men.* It is in respect to people that Christians are sensitive. If

[2] *The Acquisitive Society*, R. H. Tawney. Harcourt, Brace & Co., publishers, New York City.
[3] *Ibid.*

conditions are created in which the many are made subject to the few; if the many have to go through life with vitality misapplied, hopes lowered, efforts thwarted, while the minority make their money at the expense of the finer life, conditions must be altered. The steward may not as yet see clearly how this can be done; but *to see that it ought to be done is itself great gain.* For one thing, it makes the masses less than God intends them to be. Christ held that life is sacred, because of its potential possibilities in God. He held that life must be serviceable and not self-centered; that its fulfillment lies in good will rather than gain.

In the acquisitive order men are *inconsiderate.* There is an anti-Christian basis of *esteem.* See in what tragic fashion God's children regard themselves! Say what we will, the basis of esteem, in the non-Christian world, which is by far the largest, is *how much money one has,* not how much good one does. (Who shall arise to say that the ministry is altogether exempt from a standard like this?) Men are judged by acquisitions rather than by function. Not even the most money-mad are content with money. They want the esteem of others, if only as "self-made" men! People

care to be respected as persons, not as pocketbooks. But if money is the basis upon which we honor men, what honor have those who serve in lowly but useful work, where regard is scanty? The really tragic consequence of all this is the tendency to degrade labor. For laboring men must have self-esteem and must be esteemed. The writer attended once a meeting of employers called to discuss a strike. He was struck with the constant talk of "capital and labor." The order of the words was not once reversed. It seemed to him like an impressive summary of their total attitude, which prized profits above personalities. Men go wrong when esteem for themselves or their fellows goes.

The acquisitive order tends to make men *unhappy* because *they are not safe.* They do not know what day the wolf will gnaw at the door. They have their loved dependents, for whom they would give their lives. Yet they are unable to supply them with necessities. This makes for a grim and desperate mood; they cannot enter into joy. If the masses are sullen, let us remember why. What graver indictment could there be of our civilization than that the mass of men live without secur-

ity, and feverishly grasp all they can get to insure the future of those they love and themselves? This too compels a reaching after money that serves to distort life. Property is the one thing that can keep them from the poorhouse. And so an additional halo is thrown about property and life once again becomes an inordinate search for gold.

The acquisitive order makes for *discontent.* Men have *no love for their work.* First, because they have no right to it; they hold it by grace of another. Second, because they are working, not for creative expression, but to pile up profits for those who already have much. Third, because they have no say in their industry; sometimes even their collective expression is taken no notice of. Fourth, because they are working under a sense of imminent personal want. Fifth, because their labor is sometimes unproductive and sometimes misproductive. There is something damning to men when they have to make shoes out of paper or when they have to manufacture habit-forming drugs. Sixth, because so many get no chance for initiative; they have the same things to do each day and they get to do them by rote; men become machines.

Seventh, because the acquisitive cult shows no fitting appreciation for the work that is done. At the risk of repetition, note that at its own scale of values the acquisitive order lacks the sense of equity. A woman immodest enough to go in for burlesque movies can earn more in one month than Jane Addams could get in a year. An adroit manipulator of finance can gather more out of one "corner" than the most eminent educator can earn in all his life. Eighth, men hate to work in a system they do not trust. It outrages their sense of justice that those who do less get more in our social order. Ninth, because the personal contact of employer and employee has so largely disappeared. In the olden days when the "boss" was frequently in the homes of those who worked for him, there was a genuine chance for them to understand each other's moods and needs. But now, with miles, managers, financiers and foremen intervening, misunderstanding is easy and hatred runs rife.

The acquisitive order thus makes men *unsympathetic*. Our social problems can never be solved by mere sociology. The human element —the psychological aspects—lies at the root of them. It is upon them that their solution

depends. Jesus stressed the need for the single eye. It is our only hope! But now men's outlook is divided and divisive. Men crushed by greed see red. Men ruled by greed see yellow. Men on whose eyes there has never been the touch of Jesus Christ see others only as things to be used, not as souls to be made. A laboring man whose family exists on the borders of starvation will see the employer only as an archenemy, to be hated and despised. On the other hand, when a man "wears several men's clothes, eats several men's dinners, occupies several families' houses,"[4] something dies out in his heart. Simplicity and sympathy are banished; considerateness departs. A man who seeks only gain destroys those moral restraints that condition its pursuit. He surfeits his soul.

But perhaps the outstanding crime which the acquisitive habit perpetrates upon men is that it *divides* them on an arbitrary basis. *There is an insane difference between business and professional life.* The fallacy of this division receives tremendous statement in R. H. Tawney's book, *The Acquisitive Society.* There

[4] *The Acquisitive Society*, R. H. Tawney. Harcourt, Brace & Co., publishers, New York City.

are, to be sure, many professional men of violent acquisitiveness. But when you enter a profession you are expected to live for the service you can render rather than the gains you can get. Enter into business, and success is now measured by the expansion of your property, by the way you "make it pay." But industry is legitimate; it should minister to men's needs; it need not blush for shame. When business becomes a profession in the fine sense of the word and the basis of success the performance of the function which is ours, the social order shall have subscribed to Christian stewardship. The important work is not getting; it is giving your very best. Where work is measured by profits, there is antichrist.

Lastly, the acquisitive habit *leaves the world wrong*. It does not strive to ameliorate conditions. It makes no attempt to restore the contact between the individual and the resources for his existence; it does not attempt to let property serve personality. On the contrary, it multiplies luxuries, so that production is misdirected. With more profit in luxuries than in necessities, futilities abound while there arises a shortage of the needful things. Profiting makes profiteers; life is the

background against which these men daub the image of the lewd god Mammon. Amusements are commercialized; our most vulnerable passions are preyed upon for gain. Law is commandeered for greed, while unemployment stalks abroad, seeking whom it may devour. And the Realm of heaven, the democracy of Jesus, the kingdom of God—call it what you will—if permitted a hearing, is patronized as a dream! *This is the tragedy!* Against it, stewardship hurls all the weight of its influence. It is not for want of proffered panaceas that things remain as they are. Always there are those who are out for revolution by force. Always there are those hurried folks who have an idea that things can be changed overnight. How constantly men forget that

> "The social states of human kinds
> Are made by multitudes of minds,
> And after multitudes of years
> A little human growth appears
> Worth having, even to the soul
> Who sees most plain it's not the whole."[5]

This does not mean that we must expect things to move as slowly as they have been

[5] Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company, from *Collected Poems*, by John Masefield.

moving. There is every reason to believe that social progress ought to be accelerated now. But *it is with the Christian steward that the solution lies.* He holds the key to the door of the temple of brotherhood. What if his meekness is often mistaken for weakness? "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." What did Jesus mean? Suppose he meant what he said, that in the kingdom of heaven those filled with the spirit of the Kingdom would be the masters of the resources of the earth. Obviously, in this respect the Kingdom has not yet come. Fancy grouping together the owners of the earth in some vast assembly—the possessors of the great landed properties, the holders of the mines, the controllers of the oil-wells, the masters of the railroad and steamship lines, and then flaunt over them a banner inscribed, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." The most charitable interpretation of such an inscription would be that we had got our labels mixed. And yet that one contradiction stands stubbornly in the path of the spread of scriptural Christianity throughout the earth.[6] The steward sees how wrong things are and how

[6] Bishop McConnell, previous quotation.

right they ought to be. He will not rest content until the reign of God triumphs in the earth, until the social order is fully Christianized. He therefore leagues himself, to utilize Wesley's phrase, "offensively and defensively" with every good agency that seeks the better day. *But he does more!*

He soberly tries to discover how far he can right these wrongs. If he is an owner, he will resort to some such Christian experiments in industry as now are being tried. Hampered though he may be by markets and competition and by publicity, he will show his respect for life in his business activities; with him service will supplant gain. As an investor he will try to avoid shady earnings and endeavor to put his money where it will do most good —*to humanity.* If it falls to his lot to have superintendence over men, he will remember, despite their defects, how potential their spirits are. He will not mock the meaning of Christ by piously inviting his workers to "Come to Jesus," when it is evident that he has himself shut the door of his business in the face of Christ! If he is an employee, he will remember that service is ever superior to gain; that returning good for evil, even in industry, is

the Christian mode of life, that even when he does not make much he can *be* much. And he will not mistake silence for spirituality when injustice shows its head!

Stewards prize property for personal use and unalterably oppose it for selfish power. The average member of the Christian Church has a desire to do right. Men do not belong to voluntary organizations that make such demands upon them as does the church to-day unless they have developed to a considerable degree the spirit of their Lord. The church is shy *on* Shylocks, and it is shy *of* them! Stewardship asks of church folks that they shall look out on the world through the eyes of Jesus Christ. If they consent to do this, stewards are confident that they will render one verdict *and only one:* Personality must have precedence over property; God and not goods is man's goal; greed must go for good.

There are many hopeful signs of this stewardship both among employers and laborers. We all know some who own, as well as some who labor, who sincerely strive to secure a Christian state of affairs. They struggle against great odds to express in business life their faith in the reign of God. They are pioneer

souls and heroes. It is easy for us who have little to condemn those who have much. It is a far more difficult thing for men who are favored in life to take upon themselves the form of a servant; to account it ample honor to be trustees for God. It is a happy augury that many are seeking the light. The writer thinks now of a business man who during the lengthy illness that terminated his life was concerned with this very question of letting his business bespeak the spirit of his Lord. Doubtless many pastors know such noblemen, and the cheering truth is that their number is on the increase.

To recapitulate: Wrong valuations exist because of the acquisitive habit: wrong estimates of property, rights, and life. We have to contend with wrong ownership, by which control over life becomes insidious. Absentee ownership, financial manipulation, hampered management, capitalistic claims, result in wronging life. In a state of things like this men become inconsiderate, unhappy, discontented, unsympathetic, divided against themselves. Meanwhile the world is left wrong and the Christian social order does not get a chance. Stewards preach with their practice,

and thus unmistakably reassert the prophetic word:

> "For though the giant ages heave the hill
> And break the shore, and evermore
> Make and break, and work their will;
> Though world on world in myriad myriads roll
> Round us, each with different powers,
> And other forms of life than ours,
> What know we greater than the soul?
> On God and Godlike men we build our trust."

"Now, everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts upon them will be like a sensible man who built his house on rock. The rain came down, the floods rose, the winds blew and beat upon that house, but it did not fall, for it was founded on rock. And everyone who listens to these words of mine and does not act upon them will be like a stupid man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the floods rose, the winds blew and beat upon that house, and down it fell —with a mighty crash."—*Jesus.*

"There walks Judas, he who sold
Yesterday his Lord for gold,
Sold God's presence in his heart
For a proud step in the mart;
He hath dealt in flesh and blood—
At the bank his name is good,
At the bank, and only there,
'Tis a marketable ware."

—*James Russell Lowell.*

"For we throw our acclamations of self-thanking, self-admiring,
With, at every mile run faster, 'Oh the wondrous, wondrous age!'
Little thinking if we work our *souls* as nobly as our iron,
Or if angels will commend us at the goal of pilgrimage."

—*Elizabeth Barrett Browning.*

## CHAPTER VIII

## THE WIDER STEWARDSHIP

TRUSTEESHIP for God goes beyond business life. There are other realms in which it comes to expression. Property has wide ramifications. The pursuit of profit may be traced in every place; the attempt to protect the system that makes it possible may be seen on every hand. No discussion of stewardship would be worthy of the name without some intimations of these larger avenues where its influence must be felt. There has never been a time since Jesus walked the earth that lofty spirits have not practiced stewardship. In two well-known instances American Christians have rendered a good account of their stewardship. The slave traffic was the greatest perversion of personality known to history. Yet, come to think of it, it was merely the acquisitive instinct carried out to its logical end. It was not easy sailing for the abolitionists. Neither church nor state spoke in unison and the press was divided. But of their final triumph we

all are witnesses. The organized liquor traffic had firmly intrenched itself in business, politics, finance. But, thanks to devoted women and earnest men, the Christian Church was aroused to its sense of stewardship. It will not be many years now before, over all the earth, men will celebrate the funeral of John Barleycorn. This sense of responsibility for the welfare of the race will have telling effects elsewhere; and in the realm of property we may count on stewardship to see the right thing done. For a belief, *given time enough*, will express itself in an act. Folks who clamor that stewardship shall always be able to say, "Lo here, and Lo there," put the cart before the horse. Yet whenever possible stewardship will register itself in definite results. Let us think now of some realms where trusteeship may count.

Consider *war*. For property has much to do with war. To be sure, it is not the only cause of war. Racial antagonisms, religious differences, rival governments, all have their influence. But that property figures prominently so great and fair-minded a man as James Bryce attests: "There is still . . . the lust for territory, . . . the desire for a state to acquire, either for itself as a state or for

groups of its citizens, natural sources of wealth valuable for the purpose of producing wealth." Besides, "commercial or financial interests create ill feeling and distrust." Viscount Bryce calls our attention to the fact that "a remarkable illustration of the greed shown by capitalistic groups in different countries to appropriate natural resources has recently appeared in the case of the mineral oils," and speaking of radium, the rarest and most precious of metals, he says, "No one can guess what would be the fate of any weak community in which it might be discovered in abundance."[1] But there is nothing inherently divisive in property as such; indeed, international trade could well be a powerful guarantee of peace. Now, a steward has the right to be concerned about this thing. For he judges by human values; and a war which took a toll of millions of lives and a greater toll in spiritual values, is an object lesson burned into his memory. He will swear eternal enmity to disruptive jingoism. Enough evidence is in now from the missionary fields to show that under the ministry of missionaries property can

[1] Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company, from *International Relations*, by James Bryce.

create good will. But commerce too must get the spirit of considerateness. It too must attempt to show forth the spirit of the Lord. If Christianity is not applicable in international relations, we stand in imminent need of some superior faith! The Christian citizen must prevail upon his statesmen to work righteously in the earth, and to turn a deaf ear to "interests" that conflict with the best interest of the human race. For war, in addition to its human tragedy, puts upon nations crushing burdens of debt and taxation. One's mind reels to read the statistics of national debt of France, Great Britain, and the United States. Less than $11,000,000,000 in 1913 and over $110,-315,000,000 in 1920, to say nothing of the upkeep of armaments, which, thanks to the stewardship of some Christian men and the Washington Conference, has at least for a time been cut down. If we do nothing about it, "how shall our traitor lives be guarded from the loathing of our souls?" What can we do about it? Individually, we need the patience to study the facts and to give them circulation. Church people will find such information now available through the Church Peace Union and The Federal Council of Churches

of Christ in America. We can encourage our denominational leaders to cooperate with such a superb agency as the Commission on International Justice and Goodwill of the Federal Council. Above all the Christian steward can exert his influence against all that inferior patriotism that is based on the self-seeking motive, and exemplify that pure type to which we like to believe that our fathers pledged "our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor." Shall we disappoint their hopes and disparage God's reign on earth?

Closely allied to this is the matter of *politics*. Surely, here is dire need for an invasion by stewardship. Mr. Bryce told the Institute of Politics that in every country he had been citizens who were zealous for the good name of their country came to say to him, "Don't judge us by our politicians," and expressed his conviction that "human nature does not wear its most engaging aspect in public life." This, by the way, is all the more reason for Christians to enter political life; they could bring with them a change of atmosphere, in which there might be a chance for the healing of the nations. Property is basic to politics. "Property, in its various forms and distribu-

tion, and the social groups which arise out of the economic processes," form "the fundamental materials for the science of government."[2] For a long time things were worse than they are. Both representation and franchise were based upon property, and men were not given the vote simply because they were what Carlyle called "unfeathered bipeds." Political privileges were predicated upon economic advantages. But a change for the better came. In France Rousseau began to deny the doctrine that "the transmission, alienation, accumulation, and distribution of wealth bore a fundamental relation to the form and practices of the government," and, with certain qualifications, exalted "the general will."[3] This exaltation of man as man, which the Puritans did much to sustain, came to its zenith in the Declaration of Independence which asserts that "all men are born free and equal" and "governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed." But do they? Or do the economic groups still determine political action: "Does any one think that a thousand farmers or laborers,

[2] *The Economic Basis of Politics*, Charles A. Beard. Alfred A. Knopf, publisher, New York City.

[3] Opposite quotation.

*going on about their tasks*,[4] have the same influence in the formation of a protective tariff bill as a thousand manufacturers represented by spokesmen in the lobbies and committee rooms of the Congress of the United States?" Thus our *theory* of government respects persons, while our practice respects *property*. Here, then, is a fruitful field for stewardship. It is no simple matter to make property subservient to people in politics. Here the voice and vote of the Christian may be abroad in the land. He can, as a citizen, demand those measures that respect personality and commend the politicians who hold human rights primary. One may instance, as a concrete example, the fact that we find ourselves yet in a sad plight as regards child-labor law. While it may be true, as Miss Royden thinks, that we in America have a pathetic faith in legislation, we are sure that our laws must reflect Christian stewardship.

Stewardship must also impress the *press*. "Newspapers and magazines," to quote James Bryce again, "exist not for the sake of disseminating true facts and inculcating sound opinions, but primarily for making money by

[4] Italics mine.

maintaining and increasing the circulation of the journal, because the more circulation the larger will be the receipts to be expected from advertisements. . . . There are countries in which money exercises great power, buying up journals, and suborning them to pervert facts and to sell their advocacy of opinion." Even though "some have an honest wish not only to describe facts correctly but to inculcate views they think sound, not many resist the temptation to say what will please their readers."[5] That the press often tries to capture public opinion for some acquisitive point of view is all too evident. We need not only religious journalism but journalism that is religious. At present, though some church papers are still compromised in their adherence to literalism and individualism, one can find splendid examples of trusteeship in the religious press. There is yet much work to be done. Here too the service motive must become paramount. It will take courage to go in the teeth of profits. Edward Bok and the Curtis Publishing Company led the way years ago in refusing to carry advertisements for unsavory products. Who can doubt that the spirit of

[5] Previous quotation.

Jesus will beget great editors who will refuse to lend their talents except for the advocacy of the reign of God on earth? The press must be won to Christ. It must be able to say, not as a theological proposal, but as evidence of common sense, "These things are written that ye may believe Jesus, and have life in his name." Literature can serve two masters and does. It must serve but One. Into the freedom of the press and the freedom of speech space does not permit us to go. It goes without saying that stewards cannot but believe in fair play. They are committed to the Golden Rule. They follow One, who, being wise, still always asked those who were far his inferior, "How think ye?" Gamaliel was for giving the apostles a fair hearing when the whole Sanhedrin was for throttling them. This is worthy of emulation.

Stewardship must be exercised in the realm of *education*. Here also one is privileged to partnership with God. The steward realizes the ruin wrought by ignorance. The examinations in connection with the selective draft during the war revealed an average intelligence of thirteen. If this is the average here, with our cultural facilities, what is it throughout

the world? What is it in China with the ratio of literacy one in twenty-three? Some organs of "public opinion" limit their endeavors to the mind of the ten-year-old! A babel of tongues is child's play compared to a babel of thought. Clear ideas do not grow in muddled minds; suspicion and superstition are the weeds that flourish there. Many succumb to the temptation to exploit this ignorance. Quack medicines have their chance where hygiene is unknown. Quack literature thrives where minds are uncritical; and quack religions have their innings with multitudes whose intelligence is subnormal. Not only will the steward realize the need of education for its benefit to life and its safeguard against exploitation, but he will wish to make sure that it is in control of those who have the Christian view of life. He will be on guard against the attempts of any church, out of lust for power, to seek to dominate the educational field, and to change history into propaganda, hierarchal or otherwise. At the same time he will remember that the sure cure for an hysterical view of religion is an historical view of it. He will vote to put the educational institutions in the hands of honest men, lovers of truth, who

esteem the service motive preeminent in life. He will be instant in season and out to seek to promote religious education, which will adorn intellectuality with the grace of intelligence and *will beget the conviction in young lives that God matters most.* He will recognize that teachableness is a Christian achievement and so attach himself to those agencies where he can be informed for the sake of the reign of God.

Stewardship cannot evade the matter of *amusements.* Their commercialization is a matter of deep concern to all believers in the supremacy of the spiritual. We cannot submit for one moment to the commercialized interests which prey for gain upon every impulse that human life holds dear. The money element has come to dominate the amusement situation. "Back of the professional stands the commercial promoter, and the promoter takes his cue from the cash box every time." He is not seeking chiefly the social welfare. Walter Rauschenbusch has well stated the influence of commercial control: "Pleasure resorts run for profits are always edging along toward the forbidden. Men spend most freely when under liquor or sex excitement; therefore the pleasure

resorts supply them with both. Where profit is eliminated, the quieter and higher pleasures get their chance." These lepers of greed have no hesitancy in utilizing the one day distinctly dedicated to the spiritual for the sake of exploiting the people of the land. Though the Lord's Day may admit of a more liberal interpretation than obtains in some quarters, the steward will prefer the puritanical to the Satanical any day! These men dethrone for profit the day enthroned for character. The steward must sturdily stand sentinel against the encroachments of those who worship the golden calf and follow after Epicurean gods. He may also well be concerned about the scourge of "spectatoritus"—that popular American pastime of being onlookers rather than participants in play. Stewards will do what they can to further those amusements that re-create character. By example and patronage they will give support to those amusements from which the profit motive is effaced. The steward accepts his citizenship as trusteeship for God.

For the steward the consciousness of God means a concern for humanity. Benjamin Franklin was impressed with his responsibility

to God. He was awed by the thought; to-day we are cheered by it. Responsibility alludes to *the ability to respond.* The followers of Christ have had this and have it still. If the practical results for stewardship in a single life may seem small, regard the collective achievements of organized Christianity. There is something about these achievements that sets one's heart athrill and makes one devoutly thankful to be a member of the church. The church has often been derelict, and to-day often hampers itself by narrow individualism on the one hand and bureaucracy on the other. But still its achievements are momentous and are but an earnest of the things that are to come. Fighting against the odds which numberless ages of savage inheritance place against them, they have given point to the prophet's exclamation: "The people that know God . . . shall do exploits." They have made more headway in the direction of the stupendous social changes than the followers of all other religious leaders. They have cast out the demon of slavery; they have slain autocracy; disease withers in their tread and ignorance takes to flight; they have cast out exploitation, and democracy is at dawn; they have

smitten the liquor traffic until it writhes in its death throes; they have taken the world for their parish and set the child in its midst; they are fighting a good fight with greed, with several rounds yet to go; they have declared war on war; they have banished superstitions and led peoples into light; to the narrowness that is within them they are themselves taking the sword! Yet Mr. Wells imagines the church in doubt as to what Christ meant when he said: "I came to bring a sword!" They are busy now with personality. "All nations he has created from a common origin, to dwell all over the earth," said the international Paul of his international God. The moment one believes in the preeminence of personality one believes in the essential solidarity of the race. They are therefore at the Herculean task of purging themselves from race-prejudice, from the acquisitive motive, from the habit of greed. This is as big a piece of work as a man can set himself to. Indeed, it is too big; *he can only do it through God!* In his spirit the followers of Jesus are trying to acclimate their thought to a race consciousness and are learning that patriotism must be a stepping stone to higher things. They are striving to

elevate others to a similar outlook on life. Finally, they are adjusting their lives to work humanity good. They follow Christ with sustained, social spirituality. They dedicate their lives in devotion to God and man. During the life time of Jesus only a handful traveled the glowing pathway from concession to him to confession of him. Since then the stream has widened to a river, the river broadened to a flood, and the flood is becoming an ocean of those who are not content to lie inert in the cradle of some creed, to bask in the comforts of some self-ordered social order, to disport themselves while the world needs life, but who take sides with Jesus Christ in his avowed endeavor to lift humanity to the heart of God. For this cause the steward seeks to sanctify every trail of property.

"The Lord said, 'Well, where is the trusty, thoughtful steward whom the lord and master will set over his establishment to give out supplies at the proper time? Blessed is that servant if his lord and master finds him so doing when he arrives! I tell you plainly, he will set him over all his property. But if that servant says to himself, "My lord and master is long of arriving," and if he starts to beat the menservants and maidservants, to eat and drink, and get drunk, that servant's lord and master will arrive on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour which he does not know; he will cut him in two and assign him the fate of unbelievers. . . .'

He who has much given him
will have much required from him,
and he who has much entrusted to him
will have all the more demanded of him."

—*Jesus.*

"Above the maddening cry for blood,
Above the wild war-drumming,
Let Freedom's voice be heard, with good
The evil overcoming.
Give prayer and purse
To stay the Curse
Whose wrong we share,
Whose shame we bear,
Whose end shall gladden Heaven!"

—*John Greenleaf Whittier.*

## CHAPTER IX

## THE STEWARDSHIP OF THE CHURCH[1]

"You see," said Pope Innocent to Saint Thomas Aquinas, as they watched the priests carrying loads of gold into the Vatican, "you see, the day is gone when the church could say, 'Silver and gold have I none.'" "Yes, holy father," replied the saint, "and the day is also gone when she could say to the cripple, 'Arise and walk.'" But the Protestant Church at present is not able to boast of its wealth. To be sure, it has large resources, but they are by no means commensurate with the task it has to do. What is wealth to an individual would be poverty for a nation, and a phenomenal sum to a person would be but a beggarly allowance for institutional Christianity. The church is prevented from bidding cripples walk by financial limitations. Its resources are by

[1] The impetus for the writing of this chapter came from the reading of Bishop McConnell's book, *Church Finance and Social Ethics*. The author is glad for this opportunity to acknowledge the inspiration received from the bishop's writings.

no means consonant with the work it has to do. Indeed, to put it thus tamely seems well-nigh sacrilege. The world is in *desperate* need of the good news of God and of the realm whose Master Jesus is. If, in the face of a need like this, your heart does not command your bank account, you had best go to your knees! For if the pocketbook does not first seek the Kingdom, it is antichrist. The evangelization of the world is delayed because the Christian people have withheld from the church the means with which to reach mankind. The church can hasten Christ's reign in proportion as the funds are forthcoming.

But it behooves the church itself to practice stewardship. What it asks of individuals it must do collectively. Of course it will have to function, at least to a large extent, through its ministers or its agents. It ill becomes theological schools to keep silent on finance. That some theological students do not know how to write a check properly was the statement of the registrar of a prominent theological school. It may not sound as poetical as the æsthetic sense of some brethren demands, but it is none the less a fact that there is a business side to the ministry. Let us have

done with the sorrow of this situation. It is entirely fitting that we should bemoan it. A minister ought to be engaged in spiritual pursuits, and the material side should be looked after by others. But this ideal state seldom exists. The affairs of the average church ruthlessly tear us away from unperturbed communion with books and homiletics, and, what is more serious still, from spiritual service. By the exigencies of the case a minister is forced to be not merely a preacher or pastor but manager as well. These are the heartless facts, however we wish the ideal. We have to make the best of an unpleasant but serious predicament which is not in the least mitigated by the boards "overhead." To refuse to do the work and persistently proclaim that our hands are unsoiled of mammon is one sure way of not realizing the ideal. The rather, we must make for ourselves and our cause friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness. Nor is the situation utterly hopeless. A minister may through his business contacts preach the gospel of the Kingdom. Finance is not necessarily a deterrent of spirituality. It is not true that our ministry must needs be less spiritual because money matters are

part of it. The real objection, of course, is that one is thus compelled to devote so much time and energy to material details, whereas the ordinary field is laden with opportunities far beyond one's strength. Raising money to raise manhood is a task worth while, even if a preacher has to do it. Financial work need not *mar* our ministry even if it does *bar* our ministry from certain lines of work. Not the quality of his work, but the quantity may be affected. And if for no other reason, the minister should know finance because this is the thing his people are so busy with. But woe betide that minister who indulges in sharp practices in his business for the church, or who fails to manifest a sensitive social conscience concerning its affairs.

The officials of local churches should practice stewardship. Mr. Ford is credited with the observation that the church is clearly a divine institution, since any other institution run in so slipshod a way would have gone under long ago! In ministerial circles one often hears the complaint that business men do not show their business acumen in the work of the church. The resources of the church must be used to the uttermost for the welfare of the

work. Of late college trustees have awakened out of their complacency and opened their properties for summer schools and similar gatherings. Among some church officials the notion prevails that the church building is the private property of an elect membership. A sense of stewardship will mean that the resources of property as well as of finance will be utilized to the utmost. Who has not known official members who thought more of saving windows and chairs than of saving boys?

The church at large must keep the service motive evident in its ownership. It must even subordinate devotion to a denomination to the spirit of service. In this respect, at least, business can teach the church. It is forever on the alert for the elimination of excess machinery. And it never hesitates to invest where there is a prospect of returns. But churches are still maintained where the field is already well covered; and for the sake of "prosperity" often move out of fields where the need is imperative. The smaller towns bear ample testimony to the prevalence of the first blunder, and the larger cities tell a sad tale of the second one. We must keep the service motive supreme in administration,

which means that we must keep it supreme in those intrusted with administration—not an easy thing to do. . Bishop McConnell remarks that it would shock our denominational agents to see Jesus at work preaching the gospel of the Kingdom and then failing to follow up his work. This remark is pertinent. No, *they* must have statistics. They must have a million tithers in a given time; they must know that so many thousand are registered for life service; and these *must* be administered from a central office. This is the spirit which puts the dollar mark upon the minister. Do the collections increase? Is the membership larger? Are there great congregations? Then he is deemed a success. It is hard in the count of quantity to make quality count. For the church to keep keyed to stewardship it must exercise the trusteeship of the spiritual in its soliciting. It must be as much concerned with the honesty of the appeal as with the results of it. This may prove difficult for some money raisers! Money for the church's projects must not be obtained under false pretenses. It must be clearly understood that it does not go for the promulgation of one's pet theological notions, or one's political theory.

It must be clear that the church will use its resources to honestly discover the will of God and to make that will operative in every realm of life. There is a golden mean between rashness and criminal silence, and the church must discover it. One is sometimes heartened to see how keenly some splendid layman sees through the smokescreens raised by careful solicitors. Most churchmen, as a matter of fact, would rather you differed from them than that you dared not follow out the logic of your faith. Numbers of laymen support ministers who do not support their economic theories. They feel that wisdom shall not die with them, and they can chance the church's ministry discovering some way out of the bewildering tangle in which man is as yet. They are great-hearted enough to pay for the search of the truth even though they themselves have not found it, or cannot agree that the degree to which church leaders claim to have found it is of much consequence. They concede the church the right to seek such truth as is to be found, unhindered by economic interests and by the limitations which prevalent customs set. There are not many wealthy men who try to control the church, although some

of them try hard. Men are too fair at heart. They would rather have the church err on the side of freedom than that it be enslaved. Recent financial campaigns have taught the church that the bulk of its gifts come not from the excessively rich but from the great "middle class" and the rank and file of folks. Soliciting must be honest, not because it is the best policy, but because if it fails to be such the church lies!

The church must show stewardship in its *expenditures.* The church must be made effective, not only through a trained and equipped leadership, which in our present order will have to be well paid, but through adequate expenditures for religious education. It may have to pay less for music and more for trained teachers, although it might well have both. But it needs a sense of values that spends money where it will do most good. And the child must be set in the midst of its expenditures! Also there must be education of the grown-up folks. The church is much misunderstood. It needs publicity to correct opinion. We must attack the religious ignorance and indifference of the men in street and factory and mine in the language which

they speak. We must also introduce many churchmen to the *church!* We need profoundly simple writings which the common people will read gladly. Here lies an almost unexplored field for the Christian Church, though the sects have been wiser in their day, and have published their propaganda in almost every tongue. Let us have a ministry of good literature and of the literature of goodness. The church must spend its money where it can do most good in the winning of life to Christ. One who has heard Dr. Helms describe the senseless efforts in which the church has indulged in trying to entice beauty-loving, musical Italians to attend services for worship in a dilapidated old store in some forlorn neighborhood, will realize that architecture and art may perform a genuine ministry. The bargain-counter spirit is inadequate to win men to Christ. The church must spend its funds wisely, but generously, to supply the spiritual needs on behalf of God.

A word may also be said about the church as an *investor*. Here surely the church must show a keen sense of stewardship. To be sure, the church makes a better use of the earnings on its investments than individuals usually do.

But that does not exempt it from deep conscientiousness as to where its funds are placed. Bishop McConnell suggests that there should be a "white list" of investments available, so that one might have ample guidance as to just which investments would be most socially serviceable. He points out that the church should make sure to avoid those investments where the returns are suspiciously large, and those that are not unquestionably honest. The further danger is indicated that such investments are likely to compromise the church in favor of the existing social order. If the church is unable by the force of circumstances to keep free from entangling alliances, it needs to make very sure that it knows the way out of them.

And as an *employer* the church must manifest stewardship. It should see to it that the service of its servants is not hampered by lack of funds. On the other hand, it behooves its servants not to make excessive claims. The economic differences that now keep Christian ministers from a more perfect brotherhood must wound the heart of God. Any young man in the ministry who has been promoted over his brothers in the matter of income well knows what jealousy often follows in its wake.

There must be some better way for the servants of Jesus Christ. There would be a different way had churches the stewardship view. Secretaries, superintendents, and even bishops, are in danger of getting what in labor circles is somewhat inelegantly called "the employer's mind." That the majority of them exercise their functions with true humility and large humanity bespeaks volumes for what the impact of God can do for men. Even janitors have right to fullness of life. When the church has work to be done, the chief consideration should scarcely be as to how cheaply it can be secured; it must have thought for those who labor for it. All in all, it would be a wonderful thing if the church could make "a divine revelation through its existence in material conditions."[2] And what is to prevent its doing so, if the spirit of stewardship dominates its life?

The church has yet another duty in this matter of stewardship. It needs to examine the *motives* of those who contribute toward it. It has a considerable duty as a *receiver* of wealth. It should understand clearly *why* people give to it. All too frequently men have

[2] Bishop McConnell.

mistaken giving for stewardship, and have thought that money settles Christian obligations. The church must emphasize the service motive in giving. In this respect the church has been grossly gullible. We misjudge generosity. We need to emphasize motives. The postulate of psychologists that men can seldom be trusted to narrate their own experiences holds good when we have to ask men: Why do you give? But this is a prerogative which the Christian Church must keep. Neither size nor circumstance should be permitted to serve as a cloak to give low-motived giving the appearance of a high-motived act. The church must accept no substitute for stewardship. Browning somewhere says it is "not what man does which exalts him, but what man would do." We ought to differentiate between different types of giving in order that stewardship may not be cast from its throne. Some folks seem to "give by nature"; it is a matter of self-gratification; *there is no sense of surrender* to the will of God; there is often little thought as to whether the gift is commensurate with the ability of the giver or the need of the project. Sometimes, apparently large generosity is due to the desire of the giver to

dominate socially or administratively the church to which he contributes, or to further the interest of his business by thus gaining a good name. It has the form of giving, but denies the power thereof. In some of the giving the competitive habit of the business world is introduced. A man "is not going to let anybody beat him" in the size of his gift. Moreover, to appear more generous than others is a fit subject for self-congratulation. How widespread this unselfish selfishness is may be noted from the shrewd schemes of professional solicitors to "shame" folks into large giving, such as the persuading of some who are "lower" in social station to subscribe excessively. Surely such conduct has no claim to the label of giving it wears. Then there is the legalistic type. Here we enter a different atmosphere. Here is an inkling of spirituality. Allegiance to law forces the giving. To them the Bible says so; God's law demands it. "Is it not written in the book of the law?" For them the obligation to give is a sort of spiritual inhibition acting as a divine brake on human selfishness. They give because they *must*, not because they *may*. Sometimes people give on a basis of *di*vestment. Here it is a duty to an inner

decree, not to an outer word. It is fostered by the renunciation motive. It comes in the feeling that certain things are dear to us and just because they are dear, make acceptable offerings to divinity. It is the precursor of stewardship in many pagan cults. Carried over into our day, it says not so much, you *must* give as you *ought* to give. It is the *re*quirement of life rather than the *ac*quirement of it. But Christian stewardship is nothing short of surrender to the ideal that love is life. "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son." His highest self-expression is his highest self-offering. Thus stewardship says that we find our best when we give our best. The trouble with much of our giving is that it is in response to isolated emotional stimuli. But stewardship keeps the heart exposed to the spiritual. Freely it has received; freely it gives. The church must know why men give, and must beget within its members this sense of discrimination. Stewardship comes to say that "the gift without the giver is bare." The church must bestow credit where credit is due, and it must make sure to proclaim that generosity can never be a substitute for stewardship.

"Now the Jewish passover was near, so Jesus went up to Jerusalem. There he found, seated inside the temple, dealers in cattle, sheep and pigeons, also money-changers. Making a scourge of cords, he drove them all, sheep and cattle together, out of the temple, scattered the coins of the brokers and upset their tables, and told the pigeon-dealers, 'Away with these! My Father's house is not to be turned into a shop!' (His disciples recalled the scripture saying, *I am consumed with zeal for thy house.*)"—*The Gospel According to John.*

"No change in the economic methods of conducting the business of the world will avail to bring peace at home, for covetousness is too strong a passion. It is only the church which can convince the world that its misery is the result of the violation of the fundamental law of human brotherhood. The same is true of the purification of politics, and the education of the young, and the sanctification of the family. All these depend upon the application of the principles revealed by Jesus, and only the disciples of Jesus can convince men that these are essential."—*Leighton Parks.*

"Then faded and vanished the last frontier
Of hate, when the soul's universal tongue
Uttered the great word, 'Brother!' "

—*Robert Haven Schauffler.*

## CHAPTER X

## TEACHING STEWARDSHIP

THE church must teach stewardship. This is in perfect accord with what it is here to do. It exists to keep alive in men the consciousness of the God and Father of our Lord. It must evangelize the world with the good news about him. It must bring mankind to God. *People never rise above their conception of God.* And so there comes the question, What sort of God does it teach? *Does it teach an acquisitive God or one self-giving in service?* If an acquisitive God, self-seeking is righteousness; if a sacrificial one, love alone is right. But perhaps the church itself has not clearly set him forth. Then the question we have to ask is, What sort of God should it teach to accord with Jesus Christ?

The scarcity of stewardship, the fact that it is but partly practiced by so many Christian folks, can be laid to the inadequate conceptions of God which still prevail. Account for it as we will, relatively few have found the

God who lived in Christ. This is the more amazing in view of the simplicity with which Jesus pictured him. It is worthy of our notice how Jesus thought of God. Did he describe him as one whose chief aim is to profit, whose end is to get all he can? He spoke of God as Father. Had he resembled some stewardship "leaders," he would have taught him as Creator, but that did not occur to him. There are other truths about God which he might have emphasized, but he did not. He did not, because he wanted to put first things first. The men who gave the Apostles' Creed the form which it now bears had the truth of it. They said: "I believe in God, the *Father Almighty*, Maker of heaven and earth." They gave God's Fatherhood precedence over his Creatorship. They put first things first. When Jesus described God, when he talked of him or to him, he spoke a word that gets to the heart of us—and him. He called him Father. It was a habit with him to call God Father. "My Father," he said when a boy. "Your Father," he told his disciples. "Father," he cried when his tortured body hung upon Calvary. In such a conception there is no room for the dominance of greed. The Chris-

tian thought of God is primarily that of an intimate and intensely interested Person, who is not far from any of us, and whose will is our best. This is the only thought of God that is able to redeem men from sin, which is selfishness, to salvation, which is love. "God is the most deeply obligated being in the universe." "The judge of all the earth must do right."

And thus it comes that stewardship joins hands with *evangelism*. It is the function of evangelism to win men to God. Evangelism can succeed only as it shows God in his true light. The big business of showing men God has not proved child's play anywhere along the line. Men have nearly always thought unworthy thoughts of Deity. They have persistently buried divine perfection under human frailties in their speech of God. Even theology has been derelict to its privilege, in that it tried to adjust God to its systems, instead of adjusting its systems to God. It is still difficult for the average person to get any conception of God except that which is steeped in the thought and terminology of mediævalism. The news is not broadcast yet that God is no autocrat. Some years ago Mr. Wells came

forth with "the surprised air of a conjurer" out of the "dead museums and miles of misery" of ancient religious views. At that time he called his "discovery" "God the Invisible King," despite the fact that in most evangelical thinking the king*ship* of God (while acknowledged) is emphasized less and less, while the king*dom* of God is coming to the fore. Pell-mell in pursuit of a monarchlike God troop bands of novelists who write like theologians with the slight difference that in their writings you have to wade through a cribful of rubbish to get at a kernel of truth. Evangelism must rid men's thoughts of a despotic Deity who demands that toll and tribute shall be tendered at his courts. It must show the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, who "knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, . . . washed the disciples' feet." It must laud the service-motive which actuates our God. It is alleged that Mr. Ingersoll was never more popular with his audiences than when he held up to derision the Old-Testament accounts which claim the sanction of God for the cruelties they record, and climaxed this with the question: "What do you think of a God like that?" But to-day the tables are

turned. It is now the Christian Church which acclaims its ardent abhorrence of distorted pictures of God. Izaak Walton tells us that Dr. Donne left his successer, Dr. Winniff, a picture called "The Skeleton." The church is weary of having bequeathed and of bequeathing pious pessimisms of a proprietor-Lord. *Owner though he is, he is Father first of all!* We must redeem the conception of life by the conception of God. Herman Hagedorn's portrayal of one who neglected his privilege ought to admonish our hearts:

> "If I could only wash out of my eyes
> The look she gave me. Oh, the heights and deeps
> Of that reproach! It was as though she cried,
> I wanted strength and you had none to give me,
> I wanted God, and you had only words!"[1]

Of course, there comes the objection: That makes your God too "soft." Nothing could be further from the truth. For there is another side to the task of evangelism. In order to win men to God, it must not only show forth the beauty of his holiness but the disparity between him and their unholy lives. There must be conviction of sin—the sin of

[1] Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company from *The Heart of Youth*, p. 157, by Herman Hagedorn.

selfishness. When a friend once told Robert McCheyne that he had just preached on hell, the famous preacher said: "And were you able to do it with tenderness?" Done in the spirit of Jesus, no work will have greater results among the adults than preaching against the sin of greed. Some one has remarked that Paul, writing to the early saints, incorporated this advice: "Let him that stole, steal no more." Why such advice to the churches? Because they stood in need of a perfect ethical conception of their religious experience. And if Christians need thus to be convinced of the error of self-seeking, how much more need those who have never turned their hearts to Jesus Christ! They must be faced with the question whether they have not bought their money with their lives, whether they have not foundered on greed. Selfishness blasphemes the Holy Spirit; it laughs God to scorn. It cannot be forgiven because it cannot give. The gospel of service and love has no easy-going God. He tramples with resistless wrath on all mammonism!

One cannot preach the stewardship message by an occasional sermon. It must be the atmosphere by which sermons are charged.

A man needs clean hands and a pure heart to proclaim this truth. In his own spirit and on his knees, he must beat back the gain motive and keep unsullied in his life the spirit of saviourhood. This is no easy thing. He must fight if he would reign; and the fight is on the battlefield of his self-interest.

"Judas," says P. W. Wilson in *The Christ We Forget*, "wanted the power of money, because that power seemed to make him independent of the Saviour. . . . He began by denying that adoration of the Saviour is worth three hundred pence. He ended by valuing the Saviour's life at thirty pieces of silver."[2] That was a great word Paul delighted so to use—*Karisma*—"free gift." Perhaps it was merely naïve psychology, but Paul reached foundation when he used the phrase. For this *is* the psychology of God—*free* gift—free in that finer freedom that never denies its source nor belies its relationships. "God's whole scheme of redemption is an advertisement of his passion to give." "God so loved that he gave." What if the world should daily betray his attitude?

[2] *The Christ We Forget*, by P. W. Wilson, Fleming H. Revell Company publishers, New York City.

But in the domain of teaching lies the hope for stewardship. The subject demands deep study. Unfortunately, the material available is scant under the title of stewardship. But studies in the social gospel, that emphasize *conduct* throughout, provide splendid materials with which to teach stewardship. The appeal for the social gospel has had to be made to many who already had settled opinions of Christianity. What wonder that to them the message suggested the speech of an alien who, with socialist accent, utters Christian shibboleths? Such barriers but rarely exist in those who are launching their lives. If we are able to convince them that *their consecrations must be social*, we shall win for the full-orbed gospel of Christ the following it deserves.

Thus adolescence is par excellence the time for the teaching of it. "There are many features about the period of youth that make it a time of special opportunity," says Professor Tracy, in *The Psychology of Adolescence*.[3] "There is abounding life, vitality, and vigor. There is a maximum of enthusiastic interest in things, and a minimum of cynicism and

[3] Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company, from *The Psychology of Adolescence*, by Frederick Tracy.

bitterness. Hope is unclouded, faith is buoyant, and charity is broad and generous. The intellect is easily persuaded *into regarding all things as products of supreme wisdom* and all events as under the control of supreme beneficence. Youth is by nature theistic and idealistic. . . .

"*The moral attitude is not mercenary.* Disinterested devotion to others, and to duty for its own sake, can be counted on; more than in childhood, whose conceptions are restricted in area, complete in quality, and largely under control of the empirical ego; and more than in mature life, when the heart may have become chilled by contact with a social order that is honey-combed with injustice and cruelty, when altruism and idealism are found to have but little value in the world's markets, and when the roseate dreams and visions of an earlier age are only too likely to have faded into the light of common day. . . .

"The touch of *living personality* . . . meets, at this time, with its readiest and warmest response. And . . . response to the touch of personality is the tap-root of religion. Substitute for all finite and fallible personalities that of the infinitely good and great, and in

the response to that you have the essence of religion. The heart in youth is hungry for communion with a personality that is worthy of adoration and service, eager to let itself go out to such a personality in service and sacrifice. The problem of the Christian teacher here is not so much to convince the intellect of the truth of certain abstract propositions about Christ, as to hold up before the pupil the exquisite personality of Christ, as worthy of the highest devotion and the most complete service that can be rendered. . . .

"And so the religious life . . . means the elimination of all discordance between these two—the dominant life-ideal on the one side, and the concept of the Highest Being on the other—in such a way that the service of God and of one's fellow men in everyday life will be the natural response, alike to the requirements of a consistent theology and to the demands of a moral imperative."

This excellent putting of the matter should awaken all of us to the marvelous opportunity for stewardship which adolescence offers.

Nor can we neglect the child. From an early age the instinct of acquisition may be seen in operation. Our very earliest training

is not alone important, but frequently decisive:

> "No change in childhood's early day,
> No storm that raged, no thought that ran,
> But leaves its track upon the clay
> Which slowly hardens into man."

This is more truth than poetry. Here, to be sure, the church runs against an obstacle difficult to surmount. When a child is born and reared in an acquisitive atmosphere, when its ideals at home are directed toward the largest gain rather then the highest service, how shall the occasional teaching of the church counteract such influence? Thus the cycle leads us back to saving the parents in order to save the children.

And now, to use the favorite colloquialism of one of our bishops in the tangled moment of a conference session: "Brethren, let us see where we are at." We began by noting that there is a revival of stewardship. There are idiosyncrasies and misinterpretations, but at the heart of it all there is a determination to seek the will of God in regard to property. This is expressed in the tithe, which frequently obtains from inferior motives, and is often resorted to at the behest of legalism, but

evidences the church's desire to see the will of God done in the earth. But if stewardship ends with the tithe or with generosity, the means has defeated the end, and a good has once again been made the enemy of the best. There must be an honest facing of what life is for. There are those who try to be Christians with a content view of life, but only the view of life that fulfills the intent of God can hope to follow Christ. We see that property, an instrument for good, has been utilized for evil. A Christian's private attitude toward it, therefore, is that he may use it only for the development of his soul and the saving of the world, the honor of his God. In business his attitude is that the will of God and his reign must come to expression in it. Property, in public relations, must articulate Christ. The social order must be Christianized. The church, which most nearly of all institutions should approximate an unselfish life in God, must be first in its sense of trusteeship with the property it has. It must be a priest in the realm of stewardship. But it must also be prophet. It cannot rest content until the servant spirit dominates all men. It must both practice and preach stewardship.

"Now people brought children for him to touch them, and the disciples checked them; but Jesus was angry when he saw this, and he said to them, 'Let the children come to me, do not stop them: the Realm of God belongs to such as these. I tell you truly, whoever will not submit to the Reign of God like a child will never get into it at all.' Then he put his arms round them, laid his hands on them and blessed them."—*The Gospel According to Mark.*

"From the widows they do not turn away their countenance, and they rescue the orphan from him who does him violence, and he who has gives to him who has not without grudging. . . . And if there is among them one that is poor and needy, and they have not an abundance of necessaries, they fast two or three days that they may supply the needy with their necessary food."—*Apology of Aristides* (124–140).

"Our blood splashes upward, O goldheaper,
And your purple shows your path!
But the child's sob in the silence curses deeper
Than the strong man in his wrath."

—*Elizabeth Barrett Browning.*

## CHAPTER XI

## A STEWARDSHIP REVERIE

I TURNED away from my desk. I left the Book where I had been reading in it. I looked out of the window and I *saw*. I saw the day. What so dreary as when June goes wet? The rain had invited the wind to a partnership of molestation and together they played all manner of pranks with respectable umbrellas. It was toward dusk and toilers were homeward bound. They were hurrying to get out of the rain. Yes, but that is not *all* of the truth about the day. That morning I had lazily viewed the landscape o'er—there is a good deal of landscape about a city street. Three impressions sauntered in: It has rained; it is raining; it will rain. Now I saw that the heart story of this rainy day was not that those men should get out of the rain, but that they went into it. That folks go to work in the rain—let a poet sing about *that* and have a theme worthy of song. Why did these folks go into the rain? This evening the answer

came walking along. He was poorly clad, he had neither overcoat nor umbrella, but he had a bundle of wood covered with some burlap slung over his shoulder and with it was hastening home. In fancy I followed him. It was little more than a hovel into which he entered, but it was home! An emaciated woman—for poverty shows so in faces even though there be wealth in the heart—greets him with a kiss and with some dry garments to prove the love of which that kiss was the countersign. And arms—baby arms—were outstretched for him. Why had *he* gone into the rain? Because *he* needed bread? Yes, but he hadn't thought much of that. Because *she* needed bread? Yes, he *had* thought of that and the thought clutched at his heart. But to know *why* he had gone into the rain you must remember another thing. It was the *children's bread* he had thought of most and his heart had wept for that, for the children's bread! They had to be fed, and it was his to feed them. The bravery of love had driven him into the storm and made his homeward walk a triumphant task. I know what you may be thinking. You may object that most folks do not go into the rain thus motived

consciously. They go from habit, from a sense of duty, for the love of gain. Do they? No; many may; but not a few there be who go for the children's bread.

"All life moving to one measure—
Daily bread, daily bread—
Bread of life and bread of labor,
Bread of bitterness and sorrow,
Hand to mouth, and no to-morrow,
Dearth for housemate, death for neighbor—
Yet when all the babes are fed,
Love, are there not crumbs to treasure?"[1]

Then I thought again of the Book and to it I returned. It was the Syro-Phœnician woman I had been reading about. And I wondered if it *rained* that day when she came to see Jesus about *her* child. Be assured of this. If there was no storm outside, there was a storm inside. She walked with a cloud on her heart. The sky under which she trod was dark and threatening. Her child was stricken with lunacy. Here was *one* woman who stood ready to admit that there was something the matter with *her* child. She came to Jesus just at a time when Jesus was

[1] "Daily Bread," Wilson Wilfred Gibson, The Macmillan Company.

trying to get away from people and be alone with his disciples a while. Mark's stately and suggestive record says that he "entered into an house, and would have no man know it; and he could not be hid. For a certain woman, whose little daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet. . . . And she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter."[2] You respect that mother, don't you? You would respect her all the more if you knew she had come through the rain! Of this you may be certain: She did not consult the weather. She did not wait until it was a nice day to go out. She was after something for her child, just like that man I saw in the rain, just like *you* at the heart of your task. She came not about bread, but about mind. The trouble with that child was that it had not intelligence to understand; the tragedy with that child was that it had not sense enough to sense love. That makes lunacy so vexing—lunacy knows not love. Her daughter was *grievously* vexed with a devil. So she came all the way to see Jesus and perhaps she came through the rain. What a dismal reception she got! "He an-

[2] Authorized Version.

swered her not a word." What a chill that silence sent to her heart! Will she speak again? O, yes; folks do not let a chill stand in the way of the children's bread—did I not see it this rainy day?—folks are not rebuffed by a chill when they speak for the sake of love. She continued her request for help. It bothered the disciples. Do you remember those mothers with their babies? The idea of bringing babies where Jesus was! Now, here was another mother ranting about another child! Would it never let up? John Oxenham sings: "Blessed are the childless, loving children still. Theirs shall be a mightier family, Even as the stars of heaven." Mothers and children, especially children, bothered the disciples. Came a time when they no longer did. When the last of them—who had been the youngest—spoke his last words to his followers he is reported to have called them, as had been his wont, "little children." Perhaps the reason he said that so often and so tenderly was because he remembered how childish he and his fellows had been about children in the long ago. *John became great when he learned the value of a child.* This Syro-Phœnician woman—this Syro-Phœnician mother—had learned that. She belonged to

that time-long fraternity of which that man was a member whom I saw out there in the rain with some wood to carry home. It is a high art in which she was versed. "And his disciples came and besought him saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us." "But he answered and said"—and was it something cheering and heartening he said? Was it some word of healing to assuage her agony? But he answered and said *not to her but to them:* "I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Is there a possibility of irony in these words? The *lost* sheep of Israel needed to be found; not so a mother heart that found its way to him. Who knows? But what he said *to* them was apparently said *against* her! But she is undaunted still. Man, you must summon a hurricane to stay a love like that. You must get you the blast of Gabriel's trump before you can still her cry. "She *came,*" as though she had not come far enough; "she came and worshiped and said, Lord, help me!" And he answered and said to her, or was it to them?—"It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs." It has been said that this that he said was the most heartless of all his sayings. It

has been said that to say these words was high-handed cruelty. Now, doesn't it sound that way? John Bunyan, before going to Bedford Jail, kissed the upturned face of his sightless girl and said: "Poor child! how hard it is like to go with thee in this world! Thou must be beaten; must suffer hunger, cold, and nakedness; and yet I cannot endure that even the wind should blow upon thee." If this is a fair sample of a father's love, can it be that Christ was unmoved of a mother's love?

These words have been a thorn in the flesh of the expositors. That he should have said this merely to test her faith seems by far too cold-hearted to most of them. They sense that it cannot have been humor in the face of need. Our Lord "called nothing common or unclean." But they all unite in saying—though they know not that they unite—that his compassion here struggled with his conviction. And compassion won. His task lay with the Jews, and his answer to this call of need was the by-product of a soul so big that it cannot be bounded by any one task. There are many other things that the expositors say, but there is one point they seldom emphasize. That is this: For whatever reason Christ said

this, *what he said was true!* And in our harmonizing-haste we have seldom thought of this! Let it first be said that Christ meant here no disrespect to dogs! In the story of Lazarus and Dives Jesus showed how much a dog may excel a man. Jesus, like all good thinkers, had a wholesome respect for a dog. "I do not keep a dog," says Boreham, the essayist. "It is too humiliating. A man cannot possibly enjoy the companionship of a dog and maintain his self-respect." Masefield, the modern poet, sings sweet songs of the dog. Saul Kane, in *The Everlasting Mercy*, has known

> "Those poor lonely ones who find
> Dogs more mild than human kind.
> For dogs, I said, are nobles born . . .
> I've known dogs to leave their dinner,
> Nosing a kind heart in a sinner.
> Poor old Crafty wagged his tail
> The day I first came home from jail.
> When all my folks, so primly clad,
> Glowered back and thought me mad,
> And muttered how they'd been respected,
> While I was what they'd all expected.
> (I've thought of that old dog for years,
> And of how near I come to tears)."[3]

[3] Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company, from *Collected Poems*, by John Masefield.

"It is not meat to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs." It is not right to use resources for children for inferior purposes! But the world is doing just this. Resources for children! How Christ was concerned with the child. "Permit them to come," "Of such is the Realm of God," "Be like them," "If ye offend one of these little ones." Could language convey his idea with greater clarity? We must put the child in the midst; *the child is our business;* the child must be the business of the business world; all other business must be aligned with it. And just now it is hard going for children; there are ominous clouds; there are storms not of their making threatening in the skies. Jesus calls us to make the child our criterion! Incidentally, we might also have the mother in mind:

> "To make him plump she starved her body thin.
> And he, he ate the food, and never knew,
> He laughed and played as little children do."[4]

But this aside. It is the child's need that commands Christ's power. It is the child's need that comes to summon our lives. Until business is salvation, the biggest business in the world is the business of salvation. And

[4] Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company, from *Collected Poems*, by John Masefield.

when we save the child, we Christianize humanity at its base.

I once visited a home where poverty and filth tried to outdo each other. When I came in, the little girl set up a pitiful cry. The mother, intending I should not hear the whisper I heard well, said to the child, "That man ain't yer papa; he won't hurt!" Yet that child, cowering in fear and covered with filth, seen through the eyes of Jesus surpasses in worth the realty value of the city in which she lives! Within a stone's throw factories hummed; only a few days earlier a prosperous layman said: "Pastor, business is good!" I wonder if Christ would agree? Good; business *good!* Well, "in the day of Jesus Christ," this is just what it will be!

Sickening sentimentalism; infantile idealism; impractical and foolish?

> "Then Christ sought out an artisan,
> A low-browed, stunted, haggard man,
> And a motherless girl, whose fingers thin,
> Pushed from her faintly want and sin.
>
> "These set he in the midst of them,
> And as they drew back their garment-hem
> For fear of defilement, 'Lo, here,' said he,
> 'The images ye have made of me!' "

But if we care for what Jesus thinks a little child must lead us to the dwelling place of light. The question is, Do we *care?* Does business make it possible for childhood to come to its best? Does it strive to furnish them in body, mind and soul? Ambassadors to childhood, does business make us that? Or do we still sacrifice children on the bloody shrine of Mammon? Perhaps Jesus was right after all. We must put the child in the midst. Business must serve the *children* of God, or it does not serve him at all.

"And I remember still
The words, and from whence they came,
Not he that repeateth the name
But he that doeth the will.
And him evermore I behold
Walking in Galilee,
Through the cornfield's waving gold
By the shores of the Beautiful Sea.

And that voice soundeth on
From the centuries that are gone
To the centuries that shall be.
From all vain pomps and shows,
From the pride that overflows

Poor, sad humanity
Through all the dust and heat
Turns back with bleeding feet
By the weary round it came,
Unto the simple thought,
By the great Master taught,
And that remaineth still,
Not he that repeateth the name
But he that doeth the will."

# APPENDIX

## RELATIVE TO TITHE

*The Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religion and Knowledge:*[1]

"The history among the Hebrews is far from clear; two situations appear, that in Deuteronomy and that in P. . . . Deut. 14. 22 *sqq.* requires a tithing of agricultural products and of the products of pastoral life, to be devoted to a communal meal at the central sanctuary. In case the home was too distant the tithe might be commuted and material for the meal purchased at the sanctuary. The purpose of the tithe in this case was not the support of the services at the Temple, but a joyous meal of the agriculturist and his establishment with the Levites of his locality, the latter being included because they had no landed possessions. It did not go to the priests or temple officers. Purity of the participants was required. Deut. 14. 28–29, 26. 12–15 require that in the third year the tithe shall

[1] Funk & Wagnalls Company, publishers.

be deposited at the home (not at the sanctuary) for the benefit of the Levite, stranger, fatherless, and widow; this is not a second tithing but a special employment of the tithe for charitable purposes. It may have been a sort of compensation for the abolition of the early public offering and meal of which the needy partook. Of a second tithing expressly for the Levites Deuteronomy knows nothing. The relation of the tithe to the offering of first-fruits in Deut. is not clear; possibly the two are identical, as it seems unlikely that each generation of the herd should be subjected to a double tax, and Deut. 26. 1–15 puts first-fruits and the tithe in close connection. In this case the basket of first-fruits brought to the priest is simply a part of the tithe which is devoted as a whole to the joyous meal. Against this Deut. 18. 4 is no objection, even as a later insertion. And with this conception many difficulties vanish. 'Tithe' becomes an expression for the entire offering of first fruits, over which a sort of control is introduced (by supplementary provisions). The entire law omits mention of the tithe, then, because it is identical with the offering of first-fruits. The treatment of the tithe in P

must be considered an extension of the situation in Deuteronomy. Num. 18. 26–28 gives the whole tithe to the Levites, and this was again tithed for the Aaronites (Neh. 10. 38). Lev. 27. 31–33 requires the addition of a fifth of the tithe of the first-fruits when it is commuted, and aims to procure honesty in payment of tithes of cattle. This law is first mentioned in 2 Chron. 31. 5–6; it is not found in Neh. 10 nor Mal. 3, hence it is deduced that it arose between the time of Nehemiah, and that of the Chronicler. In attempting to reconcile P and D. . . . some have thought that D had in view a second tenth, which came to light first after the tenth of the tithe had been deducted. . . . Then later practice (Tob. 1. 6–8) seems to show the tithes of P and D both claimed by the Levites. Theoretically there were three tithes, according to P for the Levites, according to D for the public meal, and that each third year for the poor. The first accrued wholly to the Levites and covered all that came from the earth (cf. Matt. 23. 23); the second was for the officers' meal, though Philo gives it to the Levites, and so raises the question whether the twofold or threefold tithing was merely

theoretical. How the system worked out is not known. From 2 Chron. 31. 4 it has been inferred that till the time of Hezekiah the tithes were too small for the support of the personnel of the cultus, and from Deut. 12. 17 a misuse of the tithes is deduced (cf. Neh. 13. 5 *sqq.;* Mal. 3. 8). But there is no report of the actual exactions of both the tithes of P and D, and Josephus mentions only the Levitical tenth which was converted into money on the spot (Life, XII, 15); so at the second temple a second tithe does not appear. But the Jews who were true to the law seem to have recognized loyally their duty in the matter of tithes (Ecclus. XXXV, 11; 1 Macc. III, 49; cf. Matt. 23. 23)."

S. R. Driver, "Deuteronomy," *International Critical Commentary*,[1] p. 169.

"The Deuteronomic law of tithe is, however, in serious, and indeed irreconcilable, conflict with the law of P on the subject. . . . The data at our disposal do not enable us to write a history of the Hebrew tithe."

*Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics* (*Ed. James Hastings*):[2]

[1] Charles Scribner's Sons, publishers.

[2] *Ibid.*

"Among the Hebrews the relation of tithes to first-fruits is complicated, and opinions differ as to whether they were distinct or not. First-fruits would naturally vary in quantity. Tithe expresses more or less a fixed proportion. Perhaps the tithe represents first-fruits made systematic, or different names may have been favored at different times and in different localities. The tithe is called 'an heave offering' in Num. 18. 24, but the two are apparently separate in Deut. 12. 6ff. In the later legislation first-fruits and tithes appear to be distinguished. The tithe, which is not mentioned in the Book of the Covenant, appears first in the Northern Kingdom in the time of Jereboam II, as the material given for a feast at the sanctuary—though the feast was one for the rich at the expense of the poor.... The tithe in the Deuteronomic code is not a forced tribute.... It was not a direct due for the priesthood or for public religious services.... Is the third year's tithe additional to the tithe given each year, or is it a special form of treating tithe in the third year? Here again opinions differ."

*Dictionary of the Bible (Ed. James Hastings):*

"In the O. T. two ideas lie at the root of

the custom; the more antique—apart from its position in the Bible—is that which regards the offering of a tenth to the Deity as his due, owing to his being the Supreme Owner of the land and all that it brings forth, or that feeds upon it (Lev. 27. 30–33); here the underlying thought is that of propitiation—if the Supreme Owner does not receive his due, his blessing will be wanting another year. The other idea, which is obviously a later one, is that of thankfulness for the blessings received (Gen. 28. 20–22); the tithes were given in recognition of what the Giver of all things had accorded to his worshipers. Among the Israelites this ancient custom was taken advantage of by the Levitical priesthood, who, as those employed in the sanctuary of Jahweh, claimed for themselves on behalf of him, a tithe of all."

*The Encyclopædia Britannica:*

"On the religious side the oldest laws (e.g. Exod. 34. 26) speak of bringing the first fruits of the land to the house of Yahweh. In the 8th century the term 'tithe' was used in Israel of religious dues (Amos 4. 4; Gen. 28. 22), and in the 7th century Deuteronomic legislation the word is often found. In Deuteronomy the

new point emphasized is not that tithes must be paid, but that they must be consumed at the central, instead of a local sanctuary.... Such a tithe is still nothing more than the old offering of 'firstfruits' ... and it was only natural that as time went on there should be some fixed standard of the due amount of the annual sacred tribute. The establishment of such a standard does not necessarily imply that full payment was exacted.... The priests of the sanctuaries had of old a share in the sacrificial feasts, and among those who are to share in the triennial tithe Deuteronomy includes the Levites, i.e., the priests of the local sanctuaries who had lost their old perquisites by the centralization of worship. In Ezekiel as in the Law of Holiness there is no mention of tithes; he proposes to support all public worship from the proceeds of a general tax (45. 13) levied by the prince, the old firstfruits being allotted to the priests. In the Persian period the tithe was converted to the use of the Temple (Mal. 3. 8–10). As Malachi speaks in Deuteronomic phrase of 'the whole tithe,' the payment to the Levites (now subordinate ministers of the Temple) was perhaps still only triennial; and if even this

was difficult to collect, we may be sure that the minor sacrificial tithe had very nearly disappeared. . . . The last change in the system was the appropriation of the Levitical tithe by the priests."

See further: Peake's *Commentary on the Bible; A Dictionary of Religion and Ethics*, Shailer Mathews and Gerald B. Smith.

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